

3
Friendship in Death;

IN

TWENTY LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD to the LIVING.

To which are added,

LETTERS

MORAL and ENTERTAINING.

In Prose and Verse:

In THREE PARTS.

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

By Mrs. ELIZABETH ROWE.

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TWENTY EIGHTS



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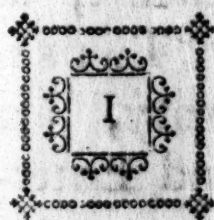
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REXX, 2012



TO
Dr. R O U N G.

S I R,



HAVE no Design in
this Dedication, but to
express my Gratitude,
for the Pleasure and
Advantage I have received from
your P O E M on the L A S T
J U D G M E N T, and the P A -
R A P H R A S E *on Part of the Book of*
J O B.

THE AUTHOR of these Let-
ters is above any View of In-
A 2 terest,

DEDICATION.

terest, and can have no Prospect of Reputation, resolving to be concealed: but if they prove a serious Entertainment to Persons whose leisure Hours are not always innocently employed, the End is fully answered.

THE greatest Infidel must own, there is at least as much Probability in this Scheme, as in that of the FAIRY TALES, which however Visionary, are some of them Moral and Entertaining. I am,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant, &c.

THE
P R E F A C E.

THE Drift of these LETTERS
is, to impress the Notion of
the Soul's Immortality; with-
out which, all Virtue and
Religion, with their temporal and eternal
good Consequences, must fall to the Ground.

SOME who pretend to have no Scruples about the Being of a GOD, have yet their Doubts about their own eternal Existence, though valuable Authors abound in Christian and Moral Proofs of it.

THE PREFACE.

BUT since no means should be left unattempted in a Point of such Importance, I hope, endeavouring to make the Mind familiar with the Thoughts of our future Existence, and contract, as it were unawares, an habitual Persuasion of it, by Writings built on that Foundation, and addressed to the Affections and Imagination, will not be thought improper, either as a Doctrine or Amusement; Amusement, for which the World makes by far the largest Demand, and which, generally speaking, is nothing but an Art of forgetting that Immortality, the firm Belief, and advantageous Contemplation of which, this Amusement would recommend.



THE



THE
CONTENTS
OF THE
FIRST VOLUME.

LETTERS from the DEAD to
the LIVING.

LETTER I.

✕✕✕ *O the Earl of R——, from Cle-*
rimont, who had promis'd to ap-
pear to him after his Death. The
Purport of thi. Epistle is to draw
his Lordship from that contempt-
ible Idea which he had entertained of all Things
sacred, and to convince him from the particular
Instance of his Brother's heroic Deportment in
the Agonies of Death, of the Certainty of a
future State, and the Immortality of the Soul.

From Page 1 to 6

The CONTENTS.

LETTER II.

From Altamont, who died at Constantinople, to his Friend in England, giving him an Account of the Manner of his Death, and the principal Occasion of it; concluding with a pathetic Description of his infinitely more happy State on his first Entrance into another World.

From Page 7 to 10

LETTER III.

*To the Countess of ****, from Narcissus, her only Son and Heir, who died when he was but two Years old. This is a consolatory Epistle, representing, in the most endearing Terms, the Unreasonableness of her Grief; since all the earthly Grandeur, to which he was entitled by his Birth, was but Pageantry and Farce, in Comparison with the innate Dignity of his immortal State, and the Glories to which he was advanced.*

11 to 16

LETTER IV.

*To my Lord ****, from Ethelinda, a young Lady, who, tho' deeply in Love with him, chose rather to die in a Convent, than to make her Escape from that holy Retreat, to which her most solemn Vows had confined her.*

17 to 20

LET-

The CONTENTS.

LETTER V.

*To ****, from Junius, giving his Friend, according to Promise, a Description of the planetary Worlds, and the Inhabitants of those happy Regions. From Page 21 to 25*

LETTER VI.

*From Amanda to ****, acknowledging her Virtue, tho' passionately beloved by her Husband, who, upon hearing of her Marriage with one Montandre, resolved to make away with himself, and fell on his Sword accordingly, leaving behind him an only Daughter, friendless, and exposed to the wide World. The Motive of this Letter is to beg of her Friend to take the Charge of her poor Orphan, and her Infant Innocence. 26 to 28*

LETTER VII.

To Emilia, from Delia, giving her a beautiful Description of the invisible Regions, and the happy State of the Inhabitants of Paradise. 29 to 32

LETTER VIII.

*To ****, from Amintor, in which he first acknowledges, with Gratitude, her sincere Passion for him, and her Readiness to attend him in his last Voyage to Spain; and then relates how he lost his Life in her Defence, in that unfortunate Engagement with an*

THE CONTENTS.

Algerine Corsair, wherein she was taken a Prisoner, and afterwards made a Slave to a Bassa. The Purport of the remaining Part of the Letter is to dissuade her from the rash Resolution which she had taken to poison him, for the Preservation of her Chastity; and to induce her, rather to submit to the Dispensations of Divine Providence, who in Reward to her Virtue would find out some Means or other for her Escape.

From Page 33 to 37

LETTER IX.

*To Sylvia, from Alexis. The Intention of this Letter is to inform her, that she is the natural Daughter of a Person of Quality, and not the real Issue of her supposed Parents, and to forewarn her of the Danger that attended her, in listening to the Addresses of the Lord ****, who, in reality, was her own Brother.*

38 to 44

LETTER X.

To Leonora, from Clerimont, her Guardian, who, tho' violently in Love with her, chose rather to die, than dishonourably to seduce her, her Fortune being vastly superior to his own. The Motive of this Letter is to assure her, that the Virtuous after Death are in a State of Perfection and Happiness, and to forewarn her, as she was now under her Brother's Care, of his dissolute and licentious Manners,

The CONTENTS.

Manners, and of the thousand Dangers, to which, thro' his Means, her Virtue would be exposed.

From Page 45 to 49

LETTER XI.

Another to the same; in which he first congratulates her on her Recovery from a dangerous Fit of Sickness, and then discovers the disingenuous Behaviour and Perfidiousness of one of her Brother's profligate Companions, who made his Addresses to her, tho' privately married to a young Lady, whom he had ungratefully abandon'd to Misery and Despair.

50 to 52

LETTER XII.

From Cleander to his Brother, endeavouring to reclaim him from his Extravagancies, by giving him a full Account of the cowardly Manner in which one of his dissolute, atheistical Companions, resign'd his Life in a foreign Country; concluding with some pathetic Repreensions of his ill Conduct.

53 to 58

LETTER XIII.

*To Climene, from ****, giving her timely Warning to shun the Addresses of the perfidious Alcander, to whose Vows and Protestations if she once listened, she was ruined beyond Redemption.*

59 to 62

LET-

The CONTENTS.

LETTER XIV.

*From ****, to his Sister, demonstrating the Unreasonableness of her Grief on account of his sudden Death; since 'twas an immediate Transition to a State of Immortality, and endless Bliss.* From Page 63 to 65

LETTER XV.

From Philander to Henrietta, giving her an Account of his being drowned in his Voyage to the Indies; of his Passage through the mighty Waters, to the planetary Regions; and of his Progress from thence to the Mansions of the Blessed; whose Pleasures are everlasting, unutterable, and beyond Description. 66, 67

LETTER XVI.

*To my Lord ****, from Serena, persuading him not to imagine that all Apparitions are the Result only of Fear and Fancy; to listen to her Advice, and make Preparation for his Death, since in a few Weeks his last Hour would infallibly be determined.* 68 to 71

LETTER XVII.

From Ibrahim, a Turkish Bassa, to Philocles, acknowledging that he was the principal Instrument of his Conversion to the Christian

The CONTENTS.

Christian Faith, and desiring him to ransom a beautiful Grecian Slave, whom he had seduced in his Life-time, and prevailed on to renounce her most holy Religion. From
Page 72 to 76

LETTER XVIII.

From the deceased Eusebius to his Son, charging him to retract a Challenge which he had sent to Lindamor, his generous Friend, whose Sincerity was his only Crime; and not shamefully to espouse the Cause of a licentious Beauty, who had neither Virtue nor Reputation to defend.
77 to 80

LETTER XIX.

*To my Lord ****, from Mariana, his deceased Wife, persuading him to be just to his Obligations to the injured Sylviana, and to set Bounds to those vicious Inclinations which he had indulged since her Death without Reluctance and Controul.*
81 to 84

LETTER XX.

From Theodosius to Varrius, dissuading him from the Pursuit of an Amour with the beautiful Cleora, which, as she was the Wife of his generous Benefactor, must inevitably plunge her into Guilt and Infamy,
and

THE CONTENTS.

and brand himself with the ignominious Character of being perfidious and ungrateful to the best of Friends. From Page 85 to 88

THOUGHTS ON DEATH.

Translated from the Moral Essays of Messieurs Du Port Royal. 89 to 95

LETTERS Moral and Entertaining.

PART I.

LETTER I.

FROM Philario to Chamont, giving a particular Account of his unhappy Amour with Amasia. 96 to 105

LETTER II.

From Cassander to a Gentleman at Venice, relating all the aggravating Circumstances of a barbarous Murder, which he committed in a Fit of Jealousy, on an imaginary Rival; and describing, in the most pathetic Terms, his Remorse of Conscience for such a flagrant Violation of the Laws of Friendship and Humanity. 106 to 115

LET-

THE CONTENTS.

LETTER III.

To Belinda, from Sylvia, ingenuously confessing that a guilty Passion was the real Cause of her sudden Retirement into the Country, and relating the particular Manner of her avoiding the fatal Effects of it, and the ineffable Satisfaction which she found in the secret Approbation of her own Conduct. From Page
116 to 123

See the Continuation of her Story in Vol. II.
Page 28.

LETTER IV.

To Eusebius, from Philander, acknowledging the Obligations he had laid him under, by working a Reformation both in his Principles and Manners. In this Letter is introduced a beautiful Rhapsody, inscribed, To the unknown GOD.
124 to 128

LETTER V.

*To Mrs. ****, from Amoret, giving an Account of her criminal Passion for Sebastian; and describing, in the most moving Terms, the Manner in which he seduced her, and her Remorse of Conscience on the Reflection of her ill Conduct.*
129 to 134

LET-

THE CONTENTS.

LETTER VI.

*To my Lord ****, from Evander, demonstrating the vast Advantages of a virtuous Man over a Libertine, supposing his Expectations of future Bliss should prove a Fiction, and Christianity should be nothing more than a mere Delusion.*

*From Page
135 to 143*

LETTER VII.

From Herminius to his Sister, acquainting her, that he had once a criminal Passion for Cleora; but that her soft and engaging Behaviour towards Philaret her Husband, and her just Neglect of all his amorous Addresses to her, had made him a Profelyte to Virtue.

144 to 150

LETTER VIII.

From Bellamour to Carlos, relating the Story of his Passion for Almeda, and the unexpected Interruption of his Happiness, by a rash Offer of his Services to another Lady, in Hopes of being rejected.

151 to 156

*See the Continuation of his Story in Vol. II.
Page 118.*

LET-

The CONTENTS.

LETTER IX.

*To Philario, from the Duke of ****, reflecting, with the utmost Reluctance and Remorse, in the Agonies of Death, on his mis-spent Life, and his open Violation of all Things sacred.*

From Page 157 to 162

LETTER X.

From Celadon to Amasia, reproaching her with having seduced him into a criminal Conversation with her, notwithstanding the infinite Obligations he lay under to her Husband, who was his Guardian, Benefactor, and best of Friends.

163 to 168

LETTER XI.

*To my Lord ****, from Philander, on the Pleasures of Retirement, and the Vanity of Riches, and the most illustrious Titles; in which is introduced a beautiful Soliloquy, addressed to the Great Spirit of Nature.*

169 to 177

LETTER XII.

To Myrtillo, from Leander, a Physician, giving him an Account of his falling in Love with a fair Stranger in the Country;
in

THE CONTENTS.

in which is introduced a poetical Description of the Place where he first saw her, and of the Goddess he adored. From Page
178 to 182

LETTER XIII.

Another to the same, giving an Account of his Mistress's Illness, his accidental Attendance on her, her Contempt of all earthly Enjoyments, and her last dying Words, which had made too deep an Impression on his Mind ever to be erased. 183 to 186

LETTER XIV.

From Myrtilia to Hermione, giving her an Account of her Brother's Passion for her; the severe Obligations her Father laid him under of seeing her no more; his passive Obedience to those paternal Injunctions, and his Death, which was consequent there-upon. 187 to 193

LETTER XV.

*From **** to ****, acknowledging that the Virtues of some Heathens were very surprising, and that his Friend had in his Letter set them in a very fair and advantageous Light. In Return, he sends his Friend, inclosed, a beautiful Hymn to the
Name*

The CONTENTS.

Name of JESUS, in Opposition to the
most accomplished of his Pagan Heroes.
From Page 194 to 198

LETTER XVI.

From Lady Jane Gray to Lord Guilford Dudley.
A poetical Farewel. 199 to 202

LETTER XVII.

From his Lordship to the Princess. An af-
fectionate, poetical Answer to the foregoing.
203 to 205

LETTER XVIII.

From Albanus to Mrs. ****, assuring the Lady
that she had wrought a wonderful Reforma-
tion in him, and convinced him that Virtue
was more than an empty Name, was a sacred
Reality, and that the Goddess shone brightest
when she put on the Royal Form of our late
Queen Caroline. 206 to 208

LETTERS to CLEORA.

LETTER I.

FROM ****, to Cleora. On the Pleasures
of Retirement. 209 to 212

LET-

The CONTENTS.

LETTER II.

*From **** to the same, complaining of the Shortness of her last Epistle. Page 213,
214*

LETTER III.

*From **** to the same, excusing her Neglect of Writing, since she had no entertaining Subject in her Retirement to enlarge upon.
215, 216*

LETTER IV.

*From **** to the same, acknowledging the Favour of her last; and assuring her, that, in her Opinion, Death would have a dismal View, if an Immortality beyond it did not brighten the Scene.
217, 218*

LETTER V.

*From **** to the same, confessing that her Reflections on Death were very just; and that she was glad to find her return to a Subject which most of her Sex endeavour to avoid.
219 to 221*

LETTER VI.

*From **** to the same, assuring her, that she had nothing remarkable to communicate;
and*

The CONTENTS.

*and that she lived as retired as those who
sleep in their Graves.*

From Page 222

to 224

LETTER VII.

*From **** to the same, assuring her, that,
as her Thoughts on this World and the next
are so just, she compassionates her Manner
of Life; concluding with this moral Reflec-
tion, that all our eager Pursuits after earthly
Enjoyments, are no more than the amusing
ourselves with a vain Succession of Shadows.*

225 to 227

LETTER VIII.

*From **** to the same, acknowledging, that
the principal Motive of her Writing is to
extort an Answer; having nothing to en-
tertain herself with, much less her Friend.*

228, 229

LETTERS to the AUTHOR.

LETTER I.

*TO the Author, from Cleora, confessing,
that, though the Thoughts of Death might
be serene, and agreeable enough to some;*

yet

The CONTENTS.

*yet 'twas with Reluctance she parted with
any thing here below; and dreaded to enter
on a World unknown, from whence none
return to tell us what they find it. From*
Page 230 to 232

LETTER II.

*To the same, di'commending her living always
a Recluse, and giving her an Invitation to
Town.* 233 to 235

LETTER III.

*To the same, giving her an Account how she
employs her Time in her Garden, and inviting
her to her Country Seat.* 236 to 238

LETTER IV.

*To the same, on the Vanity of all sublunary
Enjoyments.* 239, 240

LETTER V.

*To the same, lamenting the Loss of my Lord
****, a sincere Friend, an honest Man,
and an agreeable Companion; concluding with
serious Reflections on the Advantages of his
Change.* 241 to 243

LET-

THE CONTENTS.

LETTER VI.

From Iris to Clorinda, assuring her, that the Irregularity of her Passions is the true Cause of her Melancholy; that her Thoughts and Actions are inconsistent, since she cannot forbear pursuing the Pleasures of the World, tho' she knows them to be fleeting and worthless.

From Page 244 to 247

LETTER VII.

From Emilia to Almira, giving her an Account of the Death of the unhappy Teraminta, with the secret History of her criminal Passion for Alonzo, one of her Husband's Dependents.

248 to 255

LETTER VIII.

*From Anastasia to the Lord ****, informing him of her Retreat to a Convent, to avoid his Importunities.*

256 to 259

LETTER IX.

From Diana to Leonora, giving her an Account of her Recovery from a tedious Fit of Sickness, and a lively Description of the Pleasures of Health; concluding with serious Reflections on the small Consolations which

The CONTENTS.

*which earthly Enjoyments afford us upon a
Death-bed.* From Page 260 to 263

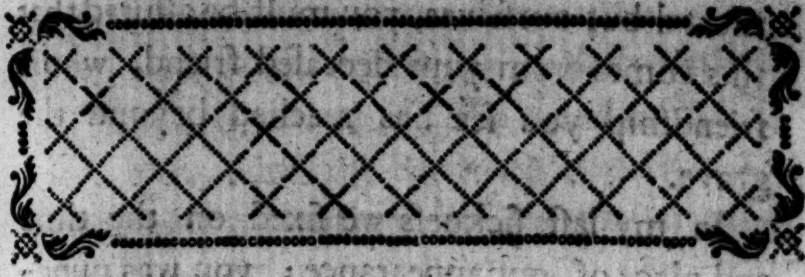
LETTER X.

*From Bellamour to Lysander, giving him the
secret History of Rosella and Alphonso.*
264 to 273

See the Continuation of her Story in Vol. II.
Page 81.



LETTERS



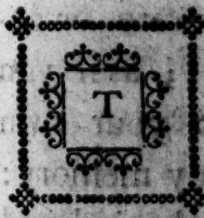
LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD *to the* LIVING.

LETTER I.

*To the Earl of R——, from Mr. ——, who
had promised to appear to him after his
Death.*

 HIS will find you, my Lord,
confirmed in your infidelity, by
your late disappointment; It
was not in my power to give
you the evidence of a future state, which
you desired, and I had rashly promised; but
since this engagement was a secret to every
Vol. I. B mortal

mortal but ourselves, you must be assured that this comes from your deceased friend, whose friendship you see has reached beyond the grave.

In my last sickness we fixed on the time and place of my appearance; you was punctual to the appointment: for though I was not permitted to make myself visible, I had the curiosity to know if you had the resolution to attend the solemnity of a visit from the dead. The hour was come, the clock from a neighbouring steeple struck *one*, no human voice was heard to break the awful silence; the moon and stars shone clear in their midnight splendor, and glimmered through the trees, which in lofty rows led to the center of a grove, where I was engaged to meet you.

I saw you enter the walks, with a careless incredulous air, not the least concern or expectation appeared in your looks; as if you came there only in regard to your own word, and a sort of respect to my memory: however, the calmness of the night induced you to walk till the morning began to break, when you retired, singing an idle song you had got out of the *Fairy Tales*. By the
gaiety

from the Dead to the Living.

gaiety of your temper you seemed pleased, my Lord, with a new proof against a future life, and happy to find yourself (as you concluded) on a level with the beasts that perish.——

A glorious advantage! and worthy of your triumph!

But we have so often discoursed on this subject, that I would not tire you with the repetition of any thing past; only once more to make way to your reason, by moving your passions, in recollecting the manner of your brother's death, which was all a demonstration of the immortality of the soul, and to what heights of fortitude that prospect could raise the heart of man, at the hour of terror, and in the jaws of death.

With what a ready composure did he endure the violence of his distemper! with what conviction and full assurance expect the reward of his piety! with what calmness, with what a graceful resignation, did he receive the sentence of death, when (at his importunity) the physicians told him there were no hopes of his recovery! *Then I have but a few weary steps,* he replied, *and the journey of life will be finished.*

LETTERS

This was not a time for affectation, all was open undissembled goodness, and a true greatness of mind: nothing else could have supported him, when every circumstance of life conspired to allure him back to life, to deepen the shadows of the grave, and make the King of Terrors more terrible.

There was not, my Lord, among the race of men, a more lovely and agreeable person than your brother; his marriage was just concluded with the charming *Cleora*, he had just finished a noble seat and fine gardens to receive her. When he was near death, she came at his request to take a last and sad farewell; angels might have sorrowed to see tears in the brightest eyes on earth, while her tenderness for him would have disguised her anguish: this, with the sight of a fond young sister, fainting in her woman's arms; your aged father sitting near, silent and stupid with his grief: what could support the mind of man in such complicated distress! the accomplished youth, who had all that was gentle and humane in his disposition, must have betrayed some weakness, if he had not been assisted by a power superior to nature. But how equal, how

from the Dead to the Living. §

steady was his mind! how becoming, how graceful his whole behaviour! never was the last, the closing part of life, performed with more decency and grandeur; his reason was clear and elevated, and his words were the very language of immortality, and excited at the same time both *pity* and *envy* in those that were near him.

When the cold sweats hung on his brows, and his breath and speech failed, joy struggled thro' the decay of nature, and a heavenly smile sat on his face; a smile that at once compelled our tears, and accused us of weakness in them.

You, my Lord, attended him to the last moment of life; and when I pressed this argument of a future state, you confessed, that though you thought religion a delusion, it was the most agreeable delusion in the world; and that men who flattered themselves with those gay visions, had much the advantage of those that saw nothing before them but a gloomy uncertainty, or the dreadful hope of an annihilation.

From this uncertainty I was very solicitous to draw you, while I was in a mortal state; but, I have now a more ardent desire

6 LETTERS

to convince you, though I cannot obtain the permission to give you that evidence you requested: however, this letter may satisfy you that I am in a state of existence; nor is an apparition from the dead a greater miracle than a variety of objects that daily surround you, and owe the loss of their effect to your familiarity with them.

Happy minds in this superior state are still concerned for the welfare of mortals, and make a thousand kind visits to their friends; to whom, if the laws of the immaterial worlds did not forbid, it would be easy to make themselves visible, by the splendor of their own vehicles, and the command they have on the powers of material things, and the organs of sight: it often seems a miracle to us, that you do not perceive us; for we are not absent from you by *places*, but by the different conditions of the *states* we are in.

You'll find this in your closet, and may be assured it comes from

Your constant

And immortal friend,

CLERIMONT.



LETTER II.

*From a gentleman who died at Constantinople,
to his friend in England, giving him an
account of his death.*

YOUR not hearing from me, my dear Beville, has given you too many dismal apprehensions about the manner of my death; and the engagements of a generous friendship, which are not extinguished with the breath of life, oblige me to give you this satisfaction.

I made a longer stay at *Constantinople* than I intended, and there it pleased Heaven that I should resign my life, which for some months gradually declined, but without any violent or painful disorder, or indeed the least apprehension that my distemper was fatal: but my days were numbered, and when the destined hour drew near, after a sleepless night, I rose with the sun; and as I had never been so ill as to confine myself, I

sought some refreshment in one of those delicious gardens that adorn the shore of the *Bosphorous*.

After a short walk I found my spirits sinking, and retiring to a cypress shade, I threw myself on a flowery bank for some refreshment: a gentle slumber soon closed my eyes, which was thrice broken by what I then thought an imaginary call; the voice perfectly resembled the charming *Almeria's*, whose death, you know, was the occasion of my travels. I was now perfectly awake, and listening to hear the gentle summons again; but found I had neither strength to rise, nor power to call assistance: an icy coldness stopped the springs of life, and after a little struggle, my spirit got unburthened of its clay; the curtain fell, and the invisible world appeared. The first gentle spirit that welcomed me to these new regions, was the lovely *Almeria*; but how dazzling! how divinely fair! extasy was in her eyes, and inexpressible pleasure in every smile! her mien and aspect more soft and propitious than ever was feigned by poets of their Goddess of Beauty and Love: what was airy fiction *there*, was
here

from the Dead to the Living. 9

here all transporting reality. With an imitable grace she received me into her æthereal chariot, which was sparkling sapphire studded with gold; it rolled with a spontaneous motion along the heavenly plains, and stopped at the morning star, our destined habitation. But how shall I describe this fair, this fragrant, this enchanting land of love! the delectable vales and flowery lawns, the myrtle shades and rosy bowers; the bright cascades and crystal rivulets rolling over orient pearls and sands of gold, which here spread their silent waves into broad transparent lakes, smooth as the face of Heaven, and there break with rapid force through arching rocks of diamond and purple amethyst: plants of immortal verdure creep up the sparkling cliffs, and adorn the prospect with unspeakable variety.

Oh, my *Beville*! could I lead you through the luxurious bowers and soft recesses where pleasure keeps its eternal festivals, and revels with guiltless and unmolested freedom! whatever can raise desire, whatever can give delight, whatever can satisfy the soul in all the boundless capacities of joy, is found here! every wish is replenished with full draughts

10 LETTERS

of vital pleasure, such as elevate angelick
minds, and gratify the noblest faculties of
immortal spirits. Oh, *Beville*, my *Almeria*
is as much superior to her former self here,
as I thought her superior to the rest of her sex
upon earth.

ALTAMONT.





LETTER III.

*To the Countess of —, from her only son,
who died when he was two years old.*

YOUR grief is an allay to my happiness: the only sentiment my infant state was conscious of, was a fondness for you, which was then pure instinct and natural sympathy, but is now gratitude and filial affection. As soon as my spirit was released from its uneasy confinement, I found myself an active and reasonable being; I was transported at the advantage and superior manner of my existence: the first reflection I made was on my lovely benefactor, for I knew you in that relation in my infant state; but I was surprized to see you weeping over the little breathless form from which I thought myself so happily delivered, as if you had lamented my escape. The fair proportion, the agility, the splendor of the new vehicle, that my spirit now informed, was so blest

an exchange, that I wondered at your grief; for I was so little acquainted with the difference of material and immaterial bodies, that I thought myself as visible to your sight as you was to mine: I was exceedingly moved at your tears, but was ignorant why, unless because yours was the most beautiful face next my Guardian Angel's I had ever seen, and that you resembled some of the gay forms that used to recreate my guiltless slumbers, and smile on me in gentle dreams: I was then ignorant of your maternal relation to me, but remembered that you had been my refuge in all the little distresses of which I had but a faint notion. I left you unwillingly in the height of your calamity, to follow my radiant guide to a place of tranquillity and joy, where I met thousands of happy spirits of my own order, who informed me of the history of my native world, for whose inhabitants I have a peculiar benevolence, and cannot help interesting myself in their welfare: but as I never discerned between good and evil, nor experienced the motives that governed the race of men, I am, I confess, astonished at their conduct, and find their joys and sorrows to be all strange
and

and unaecountable. I have made visits to the lower world since my decease; the first that I made was from a tender curiosity to know if you was satisfied with the disposal of Heaven in my early fate; but I was surprized to find, after several months were past, your grief oppressed every thought, and clouded all the joys of your life, which made me very inquisitive into my own history. I asked the Celestial who was your attendant, why I was so much lamented, and of what consequence my life would have been to the public or my own family, since those fair eyes were yet drowned in tears for one that had made such a short and insignificant appearance below. As for the public, the gentle minister told me there was a hazard, I might have proved a blessing or curse; but that I was the only hope of an illustrious family, and heir to a vast estate and distinguished title; and pointing to a coat of arms, told me *that* was the badge of my dignity; the noble seat we had in view, with the gardens, fields, the woods and parks that surrounded it, were all my entailed possession. A goodly possession! I replied, and proper for the four-footed animals that I behold feeding on
the

the verdant pasture! but of what use these fields and woods had been to one that had an immortal spirit, I cannot conceive; and for a title, what happiness could an airy syllable, an empty sound, bring with it? the coat of arms I took for such a toy, that if burlesque had not been beneath the dignity of an Angel, I should have thought the mentioning it a ridicule on mortal men. I cannot conceive wherein the charm, the gratification of these things consist: if I were possessed of the whole earthly globe, what use could I make of this gross element, the dregs of the creation? I have no dependence on water, or fire, or earth, or air: 'tis unintelligible to me, that hills and valleys, trees and rivers, the mines and caverns under their feet, any more than the clouds that fly over their heads, should be the wealth of reasonable creatures: they may keep their possessions unenvied by me; I am glad I did not live long enough to make so wrong a judgment, nor to acquire a relish for such low enjoyments. I am so little concerned for the loss of such an inheritance, that if the black prince of the airy regions claimed my share, I would not dispute

pute his title, though he is my aversion, and your foe.

So superior, Madam, are my present circumstances, to that of the greatest monarch under the sun, that all earthly grandeur is pageantry and farce, compared to the real, the innate dignity which I now possess: I am advanced to celestial glory, and triumph in the heights of immortal life and pleasure, whence pity falls on the kings of the earth.

If you could conceive my happiness, instead of the mournful solemnity with which you interred me, you would have celebrated my funeral rites with songs and festivals: instead of the thoughtless thing you lately smiled on and caressed, I am now in the perfection of my being, in the elevation of reason; instead of a little extent of land, and the propriety of so much space to breathe in, I tread the starry pavement, make the circuit of the skies, and breathe the air of paradise: I am secure of eternal duration, and independent but on the Almighty, whom I love and adore, as the fountain of my being and blessedness.

Pardon

16 LETTERS

Pardon me, Madam, 'tis you now seem
the infant, and I repay you that superior
regard and tenderness which you lately be-
stowed on me.

NARCISSUS.





L E T T E R IV.

*To my Lord —, from a young lady who
was in a convent at Florence.*

MY Lord, finding materials in your closet, I took the opportunity of your absence to give you this intelligence of my death: the hand will convince you that it comes from your once loved *Ethelinda*.

I lived but a few weeks after you left *Italy*, such was the excess of my grief, tho' a strict modesty still forced me to conceal my unhappy passion from the most intimate companion I had; after I had discovered it to you, I durst confess the guilty secret to none but the compassionate and forgiving powers above, who assisted my weakness, and confirmed my resolution never to comply with any of those schemes you proposed to free me from my confinement. You had indeed convinced me that the vows I had made were rash and uncommanded! but oh! it was
past;

past; saints and angels heard it, the all-seeing skies were invoked to witness the chaste engagement; it was sealed above, and entered in the records of Heaven. Thus hopeless was my passion! perjury and sacrilege stood in all their horrors before me, ruin and eternal perdition were betwixt us: and yet that I loved you, my Lord, I had too often subscribed to that soft confession to leave you any doubt of it; nor was the tender frailty without excuse, if all the merit man could boast, if every grace that nature could give, or gentle art improve, deserved distinction: it had been a crime to have been insensible in any circumstance but mine.—Strange circumstance! that could make it virtue to look coldly on you.

There was the emphasis of my misery, mine was a heart devoted to superior ardours, and sacred to Heaven alone; that Heaven, which is my impartial judge and witness how sincerely I strove to blot you from my soul. But neither reason, nor the nicest sense of honour, nor even devotion, could assist me; still you returned on my imagination triumphant in all your charms: hopeless of the conquest, I gave myself up
to

to grief and despair, resolving never to attempt my escape from the holy retreat to which my vows had confined me, but rather to fall a victim to the sacred names of charity and truth. Heaven accepted the sacrifice, and Death my kind deliverer at once released me from misery and mortality; the crystal gates opened a spacious entrance, and the blest immortals received me into the mansion of life and bliss.

Whatever was feigned of *Elysian* Fields, and *Cyprian* Groves, is here without delusion surpassed; these are the imperial seats, the native dominions of love; here his holy torch flamed out with propitious splendor, and his golden shafts are dipt in immortal joys: here are no vows that tear us from our wishes, no conflict betwixt passion and virtue; what we like we admire, what we admire we enjoy, nor is it more our happiness than commendation so to do.

That unhappy passion, which was my torment and crime, is now my glory and my boast: nothing selfish or irregular, nothing that needs restraint or disguise, mingles with the noble ardour; 'tis all calm and beneficent, becoming the dignity of reason, and the
grandeur

grandeur of an immortal mind, and is as lasting as its essence: when the lamps of Heaven are quenched, when the Sun has burnt out its splendor, this divine principle shall shine with undiminished lustre, the joy and triumph of the heavenly nations. The substance of love, my Lord, dwells in Heaven, its shadow only is to be found upon earth.

ETHELINDA.





LETTER V.

To ———

YOU remember, as we were on a clear summer evening gazing on the beauty of the stars, I promised, if you survived me, to give you an account of the planetary worlds, and their inhabitants: I have not made half the tour of the skies, but will, if I can, describe to you the last of these novelties in which I entertained myself. It was in a region immense spaces distant from that system which is enlightened by your sun, and created numberless ages before the foundations of the earth were laid; and the measure thereof described before the day spring knew its place, and the bounds of darkness were determined; before man was formed of the ground, and the Almighty breathed into him a living soul: an unmeasurable duration before this, the unlimited Creator had made and peopled millions of glorious

glorious worlds. The inhabitants of this which I am describing, stood their probation, and are confirmed in their original rectitude, but will never be admitted into the Empyrean Heaven, being incapable of that supreme degree of happiness which angels and the spirits of just men attain: however, they are exempt from all evil, blest to the height of their faculties and conceptions, and are privileged with immortality. Their residence may properly be called the Enchanted World; whatever you have heard fabled of Fairy scenes, of vocal groves, and palaces rising to magick sounds, is all real here, and performed by the easy and natural operations of these active spirits. I have in an instant seen palaces ascend to a majestic height, sparkling as the stars, and transparent as the unclouded æther: I might describe them like the courtly prophet; *Their walls were fair colours, their foundation sapphires, the windows of agate, and the gates of carbuncle.* Their materials here are all glittering and refined, not like the earthly globe, dark and heavy. These ætherials are the nicest judges of symmetry and proportion, and by the disposition of light and shade,

shade, and the mixture of a thousand dazzling colours, form the most charming prospects: they have such a command and knowledge of the powers of nature, that in an instant they raise a variety of sylvan scenes, and carry the perspective through verdant avenues and flowery walks to an unmeasurable length; while living fountains cast up their silver spouts, and form glittering arches among the trees, of growth and verdure not to be expressed.

They are acquainted with all the utmost mysteries of sound, and are possessed with the very soul of harmony: art is theirs in all its changing notes, its blandishments and graces: whatever nature can boast in her wild licentious charms, is governed by them; the winding vales, the streams and groves, breathe musick at their command: the nightingale and dying swan seem to complain to gentle zephyrs whispering through the trees, while a thousand airy songsters warble to the measured fall of high cascades; which by intervals sinking into a deep silence, after a graceful pause, shrill recorders and silver trumpets sound, while harmeless thunders roll above, and break with a
glorious

glorious solemnity: still the blissful tempest rises, and swells the mind to sacred grandeur, and seraphick elevation; till subdued and melted into softness by the melody of tuneful reeds, warbling lutes, and sweet enchanting voices of the *Lydian* strain.

The language of this charming region is perfectly musical and elegant, and becoming the fair inhabitants, who are fresh and rosy as the opening morning, clear as the meridian light, and fragrant as the breath of jessamin, or new-blown roses: how exquisitely proportioned their shapes! their aspect how transporting! how gentle, how charming beyond all the race of mortal men! never did the eye-lids of the morning open on such perfection, never did the sun, since first it journeyed through the skies, behold such beauty, nor can human fancy, in its most inspired flights, conceive such amiable wonders.

Perhaps, in all my planetary rambles, I shall not be able to give you an account of any objects more surprizing: but while I am permitted, I shall continue my intelligence to the most agreeable friend I had on earth; and be assured, when you are released
from

from the Dead to the Living. 25

from mortality, you will meet, in spite of distance of time and place, (those mortal foes to love upon earth.)

Your constant and unchanged

JUNIUS.





LETTER VI.

To —

MY dear sister, though the engagements of Nature are cancelled, the superior obligations of virtue remain in their full force. You have been faithful to my memory, and the strict rules of piety; though it has proved of fatal consequence to the unhappy man who was lately my husband, and by that relation a brother to you: with inward grief and compassion I saw the guilty inclination, but never uttered the least complaint, nor gave him one uneasy moment: I knew your mind as faultless as your form, and saw you governed in all your conduct by conscious honour and unblemished virtue: envy itself could not have reproached you with the least deviation from modesty and truth; nor was the promise I would have extorted from the guilty youth on my death-bed, the effect of jealousy, but a kind design to reclaim him, and free you from his

impor-

importunity, if I could have engaged him, as I desired, not to converse with you after my decease ; but he was sincere enough to refuse me, and as soon as a slight formality would suffer him, he pursued his incestuous passion. Your obstinate repulses have at last the tragical effect I expected: from the moment that he heard the day of your marriage with the illustrious *Montandre* was set, he resolved on the unnatural fact; and never was self-murder performed in a more calm and deliberate manner : he spent part of the evening with two of his friends, men of wit and learning ; his discourse with them was all intended to prove the right a man has to dispose of his life, and put an end to his being, when it was rather his burthen than happiness. He returned to his house in a more early hour than usual, and retiring to his chamber, called for a young and only daughter that I had left him ; taking her in his arms, while the lovely infant smiled on him, tears dropped from his eyes : when he would have blessed it, the unbelieving prayer faltered on his tongue ; and delivering the child to its nurse, he ordered his servants to deny him to all company. As

soon as he was alone, he wrote that moving letter, which you received; when he had finished and sealed it, he took a *Lucretius* from the table, and read and paused by intervals; at last, looking on his watch, just at *two* he fastened his chamber-door, and drew his sword, repeating the following lines, which I wish had never been writ, as I assure you does the author of them too:

———*Here's a quick relief*

To all thy vain imaginary grief!

For thou shalt sleep, and never wake again,

And quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain;

The worst that can befall thee, measur'd right,

Is a sound slumber, and a long good night.

Then directing the point exactly to his heart, he fell on his sword, and immediately expired; and left a tender orphan friendless and exposed. This is the motive of my writing to you, that you would take the charge of her education, and protect her infant innocence. Be sure to perform this generous office, as you would prosper, and be yourself protected in any of the calamities of human life. By desiring you to make all possible provision for her happiness, I present you with an opportunity of promoting your own.

AMANDA.



L E T T E R VII.

To —

MY dear *Emilia*, it will be impossible for me to give you the intelligence I promised from the visible regions, unless I could translate the language of Paradise into that of mortals: for here are a thousand beauties unrevealed, and a thousand delights unnamed among the race of men; we drink at the fountain-head of happiness, and bathe in the rivers of immortal pleasure; the sprightly hours dance along, crowned with love, and unutterable extasy.

You were witness to my dying agony, I saw your last kind tears, and gave up my breath in your arms. But how changed was the scene in a moment! from the gloom and horror of a death-bed, to the smiles and songs of angels, who conducted me to the æthereal heights! a thousand dazzling wonders met my view, the Heavens in pomp unfolded their glories, the Paradise of God

opened before me in all its blisful and transporting scenes! the happy grove stood crowned with unfading verdure; the lucid currents danced along over sands of gold; the charming bowers displayed their ever-blooming pride, and breathed ambrosia; the palaces of the heavenly powers ascended with exquisite magnificence, sparkling far beyond all the glories of the lower skies, and resounded with the voice of festivity and joy.

The first gentle spirit that welcomed me to these happy mansions, was your charming brother, gay as the cherubin; the heavenly loves and graces triumphed in all his form, vital pleasure danced in his eyes, life and celestial bloom sat smiling on his face, a wreath of unfading flowers circled his head, and a golden lute was in his hand, whose harmony, joined to his melting voice, far surpassed all description. That tender innocent passion I had long conceived for him, kindled at the first interview, and has taken eternal possession of my soul.

But how shall I make you sensible of what an angel's flowing song, in all the pomp of heavenly harmony, would not fully describe!

in

from the Dead to the Living. 31

what figures of celestial eloquence shall I relate the loves of immortal spirits ; or tell you the height, the extent, the fulness of their bliss ! all the soft engagements on earth, the tender sympathies, and the most holy union that nature knows, are but faint similitudes for the sanctity and grandeur of these divine enjoyments : hope and languishing expectation are no more, and all desire is lost in full and complete fruition : love reigns in eternal triumph, here it governs every heart, and dwells on every tongue :

*They tune their golden harps to the great name
Of love, immortal love, their darling theme;
Ten thousand echoes thro' the lightsome plains
Repeat the clear, the sweet melodious strains:
The fields rejoice, the fragrant groves around
Blossom afresh at their enchanting sound :
The Heav'n of Heav'ns from dazzling heights
[above
Returns the name, and hails the pow'r of love.*

But oh ! when the fair face of eternal love unveils its original glories, and appears in the perfection of uncreated beauty, how wondrous, how ineffable the vision ! fulness of joy is in his presence, rapture and inexpressible extasy :

the fairest seraph stops his lute, and with a graceful pause confesses the subject too great for his most exalted strain. How impetuously do the streams of immortal joy roll in, and enlarge the faculties of every heavenly mind!

Ye sacred mysteries unrevealed to men, ye glories, unprofaned by mortal eyes, forgive the bold attempt that would describe you!—the only description that mortals can receive of you is, that you are not to be described.

DELIA,



L E T T E R VIII.



To —

WHEN you had just made me happy and rewarded the most tender passion in the world with the possession of your charms, I was compelled to make a voyage to *Spain*: you saw the inward struggle of my soul, and that I must suffer the anguish of death in leaving you, when you surprized me with the unexpected generous offer, to follow me through all the dangers of the seas: charm'd with the proposal, I took you at your word, and rashly ventured my darling treasure to the hazards of a voyage: I lost my life in your defence against an *Algerine* Corsair; the cause was just, and met with its approbation in the seats of peace and happiness; for my own lot, I could not wish it more advantageous; and for your's, such virtue in distress will be the peculiar care of Heaven. The barbarian that made you his prize, treated you with

an unaccustomed gentleness; nor has the illustrious Bassa, that ransomed you out of his power at an immense price, given you the least occasion of reproach: in the height of his passion he has always observed even the sanctity of the Christian rules, and treated you with a submission very different from the principles and customs of his country. Tho' he has courted you to increase the number of his wives, he seems to have such an absolute command of himself even in the warmth of his youthful desires, that you need fear no violence from the generous Infidel: but should the worst you imagine arrive, Heaven has a thousand ways to protect your innocence: depend on that, and let not the extravagance of your grief persuade you, that it is lawful to free yourself by the fatal opiate which you keep for that design. The heavenly *Genii* that attend you have made a thousand impressions on your sleeping fancy, to warn you from the desperate attempt: sometimes you have been led through the desolate shades where unhappy ghosts complain, the gloomy caverns, the abodes of eternal horror have been opened to your view: sometimes the rewards of patience and constant virtue have

dis-

displayed their glories to your pleased imagination ; and by the soft inspiring whispers of celestial beings, your restless thoughts have been composed, while the realms of joy have unfolded their delights in visionary prospects to you : by heavenly scenes and gentle slumbers your griefs were calmed, the tempest of your passions suspended : then quietly attend the event, and the gentle *Calicara* will find a way to free you. Till *Abubecar* saw you, she was his darling slave, and as he is handsome to admiration, she loved and renounced the Christian Faith for him ; but still the fair Apostate, in her heart, adores the name which her tongue has denied. This, tho' you are her rival, fills her soul with the softest compassion for you, and makes her abhor the task that her insolent master has imposed, of persuading you to quit the possession of the heavenly truth, which is your happiness and glory : she is so far from giving you that infernal counsel, that she has with tears and intreaties persuaded you to die, rather than abandon your glorious hopes and title to immortality ; nor will she rest, till she has by some means or other secured you from *Abubecar's* importunity, of com-

plying with which she has experienced the delusive and bitter consequence.

Your coldness and aversion, with the ascendant her wit and vivacity has on his temper, will soon recover the youthful wanderer, and restore her to an absolute empire over him; and then you are secure of a guiltless protection, till you can give your friends in *England* intelligence of your circumstances, who will soon pay your ransom, which no one can for virtue lost.

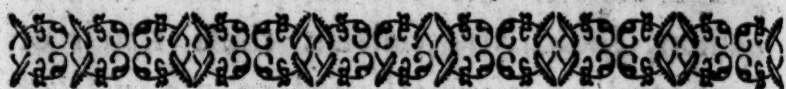
In the mean time, if you love my memory, moderate the excess of your grief for my death, which, however tragical it appeared was glorious and happy for me: I fell in the ardour of a brave action, in the defence of your beauty and liberty, and my own life: the wounds I received gave a free passage to my soul, which took its flight with no other regret than that of parting with you, if it may be called a separation; for I have been your constant attendant in my invisible state, your unseen companion in the beautiful walks and bowers, where you so frequently spend your hours of retirement: I should with pleasure hear you repeat my name, as I often do, and in the softest language

from the Dead to the Living. 37

guage exprefs the conftancy of a virtuous
paffion, could you refrain thofe floods of
tears, and be more resigned to the will of
Heaven: but let this affure you, that I am in
the height of happinefs, and when your own
life is finifhed, we fhall meet to part no more;
which circumftance, though you, through
your partiality for me, may too highly value,
believe me, you will find it by much the
fmalleft bleffing of this place.

AMINTOR.





LETTER IX.

To SYLVIA.

FROM the fragrant bowers, the ever blooming fields, and lightsome regions of the Morning Star, I wish health and every blessing to the charming *Sylvia*, the blessing of the earth!

I have a secret to reveal to you, of the greatest importance to your present and future happiness. You are as much a stranger to your own rank and circumstances as I was to mine, till I came here, where I met a fair spirit, who informed me, That when she was a mortal, I was her son, and not the heir of the Earl of —, as was supposed; and that the Lord — is your own brother. It is necessary that you should know and discover this to him, which will prevent that innocent fondness, which he now indulges for you, from growing into a guilty passion.

You

You have been educated only as a dependant on the noble family you are in, and as a companion to the young ladies, who are really your sisters. The mystery is this: my Lord, your father, had several daughters successively by the Countess, your mother, but no lawful heir, which made him fond of a natural son that he had by a mistress: his affection for him was so extravagant, that he contrived to settle his estate on him: this gave your mother such anxiety, that her jealousy and aversion to the youth put her on this rash design, when she was with child, to exchange it. if it proved a daughter. My mother, who was married out of her service, and in whom she could intirely confide, was with child of me at the same time: their time of delivery was very near together, my mother had a son, and you proved a daughter: the affair was managed with such dexterity, that I was exchanged, and passed without suspicion for the Countess's son, and you was received by my mother, and supposed to be her daughter. Within a year the Countess had really a son; but she dying as soon as she was delivered, the secret was undiscovered.

I lived

I lived a guiltless impostor till I was ten years old, when a sudden decay withered my tender bloom; but as I had been bred in the strictest notions of piety and truth, without any childish prejudices or slavish fears, I expected my approaching end, whilst Death made his advances armed with a golden-headed dart; I had no notions of misery, all my expectations were bright, though imperfect, of some Paradise beyond the grave; and closing my eyes, I fell asleep, and waked to immortal life and happiness: all that was past looked like a dream, like an airy image, of I know not what; some notion I had of a God, and my dependence on him; but how different from the illumination that broke in on my soul the moment it threw off its mortal veil! it was then I began to live and reflect: it was then I found myself a rational being, and looked back with contempt on the insignificant part I had been acting: the memory of my original follies, the childish baubles and toys that had just before been my diversion would have given me some confusion, if my case had been singular; but I met thousands of gay spirits newly released, who had performed their short task, and finished their

from the Dead to the Living. 41

their trifling farces of life; at the same time transported at their present superior circumstances, they made the most agreeable reflections on their past state: what grandeur, what vivacity, what enlargement of their intellectual powers! how sparkling, how resembling the Angels of God, their forms! while a perfect consciousness, and exact remembrance of what they were but a few moments past, raised their joy and gratitude to the height, and recommended Heaven itself.

There was one circumstance in my early death that makes me look on it as a peculiar favour, in that I was removed by the just dispensation of Heaven, from the possession of what is, in the strictest equity, your brother's right: this reflection, from a principle of justice and truth, gave me an ineffable satisfaction; since if I had lived, I had been the unhappy, tho' innocent, usurper of a rank and inheritance, to which I had not the least real title. This, with a thousand other advantages, makes me bless the period that freed me from mortality; that happy moment that delivered me from ignorance and vanity; from the errors, the guilt, the miseries of human life; of which tho' I had but

but little experience, I am now fully informed of the state of my fellow-creatures, and with what toil and hazard a longer course of years had been attended.

I remember no engagement to the world, but my affection for you; nor has Death effaced the tender impression, but what was then a natural sympathy, is now a rational esteem: I view with pleasure your growing virtue, and frequent my native world for your sake. There was something perfectly engaging in the guiltless sorrow you expressed in my sickness; and when my eyes were closed in death, you would have watched the breathless clay, in hopes to wake me from the fatal slumbers again; nor could the gloomy solemnity of a room of state deter you from paying your visits to the silent reliques. If any thing could have tempted me to wish myself a mortal again, it would have been the tender tears you shed for me. The only intervals of human life I review with pleasure, are the hours I spent with you: this gentle passion was the stamp of Heaven on my soul, the first soft impression it received; and it gains new energy in these happy regions, of pure beneficence and love. This gives me a constant
soli-

solicitude, while I see you on the borders of such a temptation: you are yet perfectly guiltless, and have done nothing unbecoming the sanctity of nature, and the chaste affection of a sister for a brother: but you are on the very limits of danger; a step farther, the least advance, involves you in sin and destruction. I know this discovery will give you a secret horror, and quench every kindling desire: the purity of your virtue will start at the enchanting error, that might have led you on to certain perdition; for young as you are, the contagious spark is ready to kindle, and the lovely boy appears more alluring: your mutual conversation, and the early dawning of superior merit in both, endeared you to each other by such sentiments as only noble and virtuous minds experience. But as a more late discovery might have been fatal to your innocence and peace, I impatiently attended an opportunity and method to make you sensible of your danger. I know, tho' I have been dead four years, you still remember me, and I have often heard you name me, and seen you with delight gazing on my picture; this made me resolve to appear to you when I saw you: the first opportunity that pleased

pleased me, you were sitting, gazing at your own reflection, and sticking flowers in your hair, to adorn it for your young lover: I knew you had read of fairies, and looked at painted *Cupids*, with delight; in such a poetical form I thought you would have heard my story, and been pleased with my figure;

*While youthful splendour lighten'd in my eyes,
Clear as the smiling glory of the skies;
Sprinkled with radiant gold, a purple hue
My wings display'd, my robe celestial blue;
More white than flax my curling tresses flow'd,
My dimpled cheeks with rosy beauty glow'd.*

I could not have believed a form more gay than those that glittered on your fan could have discomposed you; but, to my surprize, I saw you faint away, before I had begun to speak to you: you soon recovered from the swoon, and returning to the house, told a story, which you found nobody believed: so wise is the age in which you live, as not to be imposed on! You easily persuaded yourself 'twas no more than a dream: however, I durst attempt your courage no more, but give you this important information this way; which if you should not credit, you are undone. In this admonition your guardian angel joins with

ALEXIS.



L E T T E R X.

To LEONORA.

YOUR story of seeing an apparition in the garden, I perceive, has frightened your whole family, and not a mortal durst venture into the haunted walk, as they call it, after the sun sets, but your brother, to whom I have not the least intention to shew myself: 'twas only to you, my charming *Leonora*, the visit was design'd; I flatter'd myself, your good sense and uncommon presence of mind would have guarded you from those unreasonable fears.

As I expected, the fine evening induced you to take your accustomed walk: the sun was hardly set, when you entered a long avenue of trees, that led to a green flowery arch, which looked on a sylvan palace; here I seated myself in a human, and, as I thought, a very agreeable figure and dress; and as much as possible, disguising the splendor of immortality, I imitated my mortal form; and
so

so pleased myself, that by seeing me at a distance, you might come nearer without surprize, or retire, if your courage failed. As soon as you perceived me, you stopped in some consternation, and seemed in suspense, whether you should go nearer, or make your retreat: I durst not rise, nor make the least offer to follow, for fear you should take your flight with too much speed and disorder; and as you found I was a very civil apparition, and would not intrude on your retirement, you went off with a sober and decent pace, often looking back to convince yourself that what you saw was real. As soon as you had reached the house, I shifted my material figure for one more becoming the dignity of the celestial condition; and being again invisible, I heard the fantastick relation you gave your brother, who told you, 'twas all the effect of the spleen and obstinate grief you had indulged since my death: you still asserted the reality of what you told him, but he believed it no more than if he had heard it from the pulpit.

You might have dismissed every thought of fear; I would not have injured you when I was a mortal liable to folly and error, much

less in a state of perfection and happiness: there is not a spark of guilt or malignity left in virtuous minds, when released from their earthly prison; all is gentle and kind, and their concern for human welfare is infinitely more tender and disinterested than before.

The terror with which men fly us, would have something in it incredible, if we did not remember our own original folly and ignorance; but as we do, your strange apprehensions only divert and entertain us. If you thought justly, you would have more reason to run full speed from one another, than from us, who have neither permission nor inclination to injure, but are ready to screen you in a thousand dangers, and to promote your interest with the most generous concern, while you are entirely ignorant of your benefactors. Were human organs more refined, and your preceptions heightened to a greater delicacy, you would see a thousand æthereal forms in the full bloom of immortal beauty, and undecaying life; not fashioned to give you terror, but love and delight.

You see, my dear *Leonora*, I would fain cure your prejudices, and reconcile you to the society of spirits; that you may sometimes permit

permit me to warn your unguarded years, when dangers and snares attend you.

You know your father left me the guardian of your fortune and beauty, so favourable was his opinion of me; this circumstance made me miserable, and at once cut off all my future views of happiness: I had indulged a secret passion for you, and flattered myself you had the same for me; but as my birth and fortune were much inferior to your's, I was resolved rather to die than use the advantage that was in my power, or violate the sacred trust I had undertaken. By a thousand little soft inadvertencies, you discovered your passion; but though secure of success, I durst not seduce you into a compliance of marriage so vastly below your high rank and character, nor take the advantage of betraying your thoughtless years to an action unbecoming your quality and fortune: my soul was unstained with any design that was mean and selfish, and the entire confidence your father had in my integrity and conduct, fixed my resolution of acting up to the severest rules of virtue and truth. But to what distress was I reduced! I loved you to madness, while I never approached

you but with a dissembled indifference : this restraint, and the constant agitation of my thoughts, disordered my health, and threw me into a violent fever, which soon finished my life. The justice and fidelity of my conduct found its immense reward, and left me nothing to repent of, but the giving my trust entirely to your brother's care, whose licentious manners will expose you to a thousand dangers. To repair this negligence, I would fain have induced you to a conversation, that might have directed your conduct, and fortified your virtue by my friendly admonition : But since your fears put it out of my power ever to be visible to you again, I must take this way to convince you how unchangeable my concern for your happiness is : Oh, let it not be dearer to me than it is to yourself !

CLERIMONT.



LETTER XI.

To the same.

I Leave your fellow-mortals to congratulate your recovery, but I must own 'twas a disappointment to me: you were on the confines of immortality; the angels, who are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, had prepared their song of triumph to receive you: I had wreathed a garland of the fairest flowers that bloomed in the Paradise of God, to crown such early and distinguished virtue; with impatience I numbered your moments, and expected every one would be your last; the sparkling vivacity of your eyes expired, the roses on your cheeks vanished into a mortal paleness, and the springs of life seemed just ready to cease their motion; when he, who governs Nature with a supreme command, restored you back to health. Your recovery was surprising even to angels, who though ignorant of the li-
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from the Dead to the Living. 51

mits the Sovereign Disposer has set to human life, yet often make exact conjectures of the course of second causes, and the period of mortal lives. You are certainly given back as a blessing to the world: your example may yet make a thousand profelytes to Virtue: but for my part, nothing but the will of Heaven could reconcile me to this dispensation; when you was just in the harbour, to be tossed back again on the tempestuous ocean; when you had welcomed Death as your kind deliverer, ready to free you from *Cassander's* importunity, and your Brother's tyranny, who will do his utmost to compel you to this detestable marriage: but your constancy to refuse it is of the highest importance to your present and future happiness; he is already married under a borrowed name, to a young and beautiful *Italian*, whom he stole from her parents; and after he had lived two months concealed with her, the perjured man left and abandoned her to misery: in the height of her anguish she put herself into a Nunnery, where she wastes her days in a reluctant and unprofitable devotion: for true religion cannot exist but by

our choice; necessity can give nothing but the appearance of it.

This is a secret, of which you would never have been informed by any human means; if you discover it to your Brother, it will deliver you from the violence which he is determined to use, to force you to wed *Cassandra*, another name for *Misery*.

It is a disinterested concern for you, that makes me give you this advice: there is no jealousy in heavenly minds, they know their pre-eminence, and should they appear in their celestial splendor, the most perfect beauty of the children of men would wither in their presence: but vanity and emulation are no more, and all selfish designs are unknown in these happy Continents.

You may, by making a proper use of this notice, provide for your own happiness; but blessed be the great Author of all Good! you cannot add to mine.

CLERIMONT.



L E T T E R X I I .

To my dear Brother.

YOUR friend, the unhappy *Carlos*, died this night at *Naples*: I was willing to surprize you with this intelligence, in a way which no human speed can reach.

I wish my endeavours for your reformation may have more success now, than they had when I was in a state of mortality: I am persuaded, if you had seen the exit of the wretched youth, who had been the companion of your riots, it would have convinced you of the falshood of his principles; and how little support the thoughts of falling back into his original nothing gave him, when the gloomy hour approached, in which he was to lose the sight of the sun and stars, with all the visible beauties of Nature, for ever.

To be insensible! to be no more! to find his eyes closing in an eternal sleep! gave him inexpressible horrors. But if this was the

worst that he apprehended, never did mortal give up his life in a manner more cowardly and inconsistent: he durst not bear darkness or solitude one moment; he started at a shadow, and shewed a more than childish fear and weakness in his actions; he even begged his Physicians to flatter him with the hopes of life, and not let him know if they thought his case desperate: he charged his attendant not to mention death or the grave, nor to speak a serious word in his hearing: though his affairs were in the utmost disorder, no person durst venture to advise him to settle them by a will. But all these cautions gave him no relief; the anguish, the guilt, the confusion of his mind, was visible in his looks: the abandoned *Amoret*, who had followed him in the disguise of a Page, was seldom permitted to see him; and whenever she approached him, he trembled and fell into the greatest agonies, closed his eyes, or turned them from her; but spoke nothing to support her in the distress he had brought on her, nor expressed the least remorse for having seduced her to leave the noble *Sebastian*, to whom she was engaged by marriage-vows, and a thousand tender obligations. His peevishness and im-

from the Dead to the Living. 55

patience were insufferable, and even despicable to his own servants: when the medicines he took had not their expected success, he reproached his physicians with negligence or want of skill; and yet by intervals implored their assistance, as if his being itself depended on their art. His senses were perfect to the last gasp; with amazement he saw the universal Terror make its slow and dreadful approaches; and after a tedious and painful struggle, yielded to the gloomy conqueror, and with a deep groan gave up his breath, and went to make the great experiment.

I hope this account of your friend's death will have the happy effect I designed it, and make you recollect the counsel I gave you with my dying breath;—the best legacy I could bequeath, if I had had Empires to dispose of.

My dear Brother, I can have no selfish motives now, in endeavouring to reclaim your extravagancies: in this superior state, my concern for your happiness must be all abstract and generous: the acknowledgments of indigent miserable mortals, signify nothing to spirits exalted to celestial dignities, in the full enjoyment of immortal pleasures; but

this gives them the most kind and beneficent dispositions to erring men, whom they would fain allure into the paths that lead to happiness: those glimmering sparks of goodness and amity, which in your cold regions are but just dawning in virtuous minds, in these warmer climates acquire new ardour, and burn with eternal splendour.

I have more zeal than ever for your interest, and let me recall, but not reproach you with, the obligations you have to pay some regard to my advice. You know, when we lost the best of parents, that he left his whole estate to my disposal, with such a moderate fortune to your share as must have restrained your wild expences; but when I found you had some sense of your folly, in hopes to reform you by generous treatment, I immediately settled on you half the vast fortune that was in my power. I will not urge my venturing my life in your defence, when assaulted in our travels; for this was but an action of humanity, which every brave man owes to a perfect stranger: but I must insist on the merit of resigning my pretensions to the lovely *Bellamira* for you: she was all the joy, the hope, I had on earth; I loved her

her as I loved virtue and happiness ; and yet when you discovered to me the anguish and disorder of your mind, and your violent passion for her, I made a retreat, and left the weeping beauty to reproach me with a levity and indifference, to which my heart was a stranger ; disguised my tender inclination, and pleaded your's with such success, that she yielded to your request, and gave her matchless charms and immense fortune to your possession.

But this advantageous match had not the effect I hoped, nor was the least restraint to your licentious manner of life : you acted a shameful part in assisting *Carlos* in his affair with *Amoret*, and a more shameful one in promising to protect and support her, if he abandoned her, when you knew what repeated favours you had received from the injured and generous *Sebastian* : your treacherous and ungrateful treatment of a man of his exalted merit, fills me with the greatest remorse and confusion ; a thousand and a thousand times have I reproached myself for having been the unhappy instrument of *Belamira*'s ruin, who pined beneath her grief, like a fair flower blasted in its prime : I never

ver met her eyes but she might have seen the remorse and confusion of my soul. The negligence and contempt with which you treated the best of women, sunk my youthful spirits, damped my noblest designs, and clouded the gayest season of my life. While death made its slow approaches, the last favour I begged of you was to be just to your unhappy wife, in breaking all engagements with the lewd and infamous *Amoret*: this you promised me with a religious solemnity; but I know her present distress (though the just effect and reward of her crimes) will be your snare; she is all enchantment, and will I fear be your ruin: But if you reject my advice, take this caution from the Royal Penitent: *her house is the way to death, and her gates lead down to Hell*: and I desire you to consider seriously, that this admonition must *rescue* you from or *double* your guilt.

CLEANDER.



L E T T E R XIII.

To —

HOw different my present manner of existence is from my former state, my affection to the fair *Climene* is unchanged: as I live and act in a way inexpressibly superior to mortal life, so the beneficent dispositions of my nature rise to a more noble and generous height. My concern for your happiness is more tender and disinterested than ever: I have guarded your nightly slumbers, waited on your solitary walks, and followed you like your attendant angel, who, pleased with my officious caré, has often left you to my charge. Your present danger gives me as much anxiety, as consists with a state of happiness: I could not refrain from giving you this warning, which to your surprize you'll find on your toilet, among trifles the most its reverse.

D 6

You

You are, O too credulous fair ! on the very brink of ruin ; treachery and delusion are in *Alcander's* eyes and tongue, and if you keep this night's appointment with him, you are undone. Infamy and perdition are before you ; the evil *Genii*, that envy the happiness of the human race, already insult my pious care ; and your celestial guardian seems half resolved to quit his trust ; the tender grief hangs on his beautiful face, like a cloud on a rosy morning ; and in the deepest silence of the night, when the creation seemed lulled in an universal slumber, in the gloom of a neighbouring grove that you often frequent, I heard him tune his silver lute to strains soft and languishing as those in which the heavenly ministers mourned the loss of Paradise, and the bold transgression of the first woman that fell. And your's, unhappy maid ! will be a fall from the heights of honor, from the very triumph of virtue. What can man believe ! What can the sex boast, when such innocence, such truth, such modesty as your's, are perverted ? vice will insult, to find *Glimene* among her votaries, and hardly believe her own conquest ; surprized like the barbarous *Gauls* in the *Roman* senate,

senate, who thought it an assembly of Gods, till they saw them bleed.

With what a profligate air, with what insolent vanity, did your young seducer leave you last night ! how proud of his unexpected success, when he had gained your consent to the guilty assignation ! I stayed with you an unseen witness of the remorse and confusion in which he left you : how disordered ! how uneasy ! how unlike yourself, did you appear ! it was your usual hour of devotion ; a Bible lay near, which you took in your hand, but durst not open, for fear the sanctity of its rules should reproach you : the distraction of your thoughts gave me hopes that you would recover yourself, and break the guilty engagement you had made. To confirm your doubtful virtue, I was on the point of making myself visible ; but the unaccountable fear that mortals have of the inhabitants of the immaterial worlds restrained me, lest the effect should have been fatal to your timorous temper, however gentle and propitious my appearance and address had been : and I thought this letter might less surprize, and more calmly persuade you.

You

You have yet a few hours to recollect yourself, and sure you will not give up an unblemished reputation, with all the peace and innocence of your mind, to this blind extravagant passion! besides the injustice to the unhappy *Sylvia*, to whom *Alcander* is engaged by a thousand vows, and who now pines away in obscurity, a victim to his falshood and perjury: be virtuous and compassionate; be kind to her, and just to yourself.

After this warning, even from the dead, your crime will be aggravated: you must deliberately venture on perdition, and damn yourself with design, and sober reflection; you must desperately give up your title to celestial happiness, to the worlds of life and pleasure, of immortal beauty and youth: Oh, how superior to that, with which you are at this instant so fatally enamoured below!



of Terrors! where is thy boasted victory? where is thy scepter and imperial horrors, thy gloomy state, and dreadful attendants? where are the vast dominions, the cheerless and formless darkness, the shade and the emptiness, the seats of corruption and decay? the spell is broken! the enchantment is dissolved! the shadows, the phantoms, the visionary terrors fly! the celestial morning dawns, and charming scenes arise: but oh! how boundless, how various, how transporting the prospect!

Still lost in joy and wonder, tell me, I said, ye Angels, ye smiling forms that surround me, what easy passage has my spirit found from its mortal prison? what gentle hand has unlocked my earthly fetters, and brought me out of darkness and confinement into immense light and liberty? who was the kind messenger that conveyed the welcome invitation to my ear? what melodious voice called me away from yonder cold tempestuous regions, to these soft and peaceful habitations? how have I found my passage through the trackless æther, and gained the summit of the everlasting hills? am I awake? do I dream? is this a gay, a flattering vision? Oh, no! 'tis all blissful and
transf-

transporting certainty! I see, I hear things unutterable, such as never entered into the heart of mortal man to conceive.—Read and believe; believe and be happy.

You see, my dear sister, how blindly you repine at the decrees of Heaven, and how unreasonably you lament what you call my early and untimely fate. Could I be happy too soon? I left the world, indeed, in the full pride of my youthful years, in the height of greatness and reputation, surrounded with the blandishments and flatteries of pleasure: but these advantages might have been fatal snares to my virtue in a longer trial; it was indulgent in Heaven, after a short probation, to crown me with the rewards of victory: 'tis past the toil, the danger; and all to come is endless peace and triumph.

If you could see as far into futurity now, and think as justly of it as you will certainly do on your death-bed, this letter from me had been superfluous: I only can *design* it beneficial, you may *make* it so.



LETTER XV.

To —

TIS past! the voyage of life is finished! instead of informing you, that I am arrived at the *Indian* coast, this is to let you know, that I am safely landed on the Celestial shores: the vessel in which I was embarked, by a tempest sunk to the bottom of the ocean, and the angel of the waters received my newly unembodied soul.

I was surprized at the different manner of my existence: I breathed indeed no longer; but I lived, I heard, I saw, with a more exquisite sense than before. But a few moments were past since the raging billows carried destruction in their appearance: and now I moved unterrified through the deeps, and surveyed the foundation of the ancient hills: the regent of the waters, pleased with my curiosity, led me through his crystal palaces and coral groves, shewed me the pearly grottoes and alcoves of amber, with a
thousand

thousand wonders, kept secret from the race of men since the basis of the mountains were laid.

As soon as I had gone the round of the liquid regions, an æthereal messenger took me under his conduct : I followed my gentle guide thro' the airy spaces, and here was all novelty and surprize ; I made the tour of the universe, and exploded the limits of the creation with unspeakable agility ; I moved from star to star, and met ten thousand suns blazing in full glory, without fear or consternation ; I followed the track of prodigious comets, that drew their flaming tails over half the sky. From the Planetary Regions I ascended with the ease and swiftness of a thought, to the superior Heaven, the imperial palace of the Most High: but here description fails, and all beyond is unutterable.

This is the only account you can possibly receive of my death, which your own fears had so truly presaged at our parting: and this, my much-loved *Henrietta*, I hope will put an end to all your anxiety ; for since the change has proved so happy for me, you are too much my friend to be concerned thereat.

PHILANDER.



L E T T E R XVI.

To my Lord —

My dear Brother,

AS immaterial beings mingle unseen in what society they please, I had the curiosity last night to know your thoughts of what had happened to you the night before, and I heard you make a very gay declamation to some of your free companions, on the power of fancy, and the strength of your own imagination: but really, my Lord, you are not so visionary and extravagant as you represented yourself: there is nothing more certain than what you saw and heard; and you might have credited your senses without so much diffidence and modesty, which you turn into a vice.

You have but a few weeks, my dear brother, to live; your sands are numbered, and your last hour is determined. I obtained a permission seldom allowed, to give you some
warning

warning of your approaching fate: I chose the opportunity, when I found you in a clear moon-light night, sitting in a pensive posture, by the side of a fountain in your garden. To gain credit to my message, I stood before you, in the splendour of a heavenly form, and the bloom of immortal beauty; but so resembling my former self, that in your surprise you called me sister, and stepped forward to embrace me. I durst not profane myself by a mortal touch, but eluding your arms, placed myself before you on the opposite side of the canal. I stood silent some time, that you might be recollected; and then setting 'a golden lute which I had in my hand, to one of the melodious strains which angels sing to expiring saints, when they would soften the agonies of death, and make its terrors smile; in those languishing and melting notes I gave you an invitation to the starry mansions, believing this would have a much better effect than any thing terrible, to one of your undaunted temper: I delivered my message, and in an instant disappeared.

I have repeated these circumstances to you, as a proof that all was real, and neither a dream,

dream, nor a waking *reverie*, as you have persuaded yourself. But since no mortal knows this but yourself, and you concealed the greatest part of this relation from your gay friends, when you was so eloquent on the wonders of imagination, I hope this will find its wished success, and put you on the most exact preparation to meet with a Christian fortitude the greatest terror that mortal man can encounter. Though your life has been unstained with any base or unjust action, there are some levities in your conversation, that require your speedy penitence and reformation; or seeming trifles will enlarge themselves into the greatest terrors.

It is a serious thing, my Lord, to die; you thought so, when with the most tender concern you saw me shivering and pale, anxious and fearful, on the very borders of death, doubtful to enter, and terrified at the darkness that hung on the gloomy valley; when even the follies of my childhood, which was hardly past, and the slightest errors of my youth, sat heavy on my soul. And, oh! how unwillingly did my soul quit its agreeable mansion! how many soft engagements made me fond of life! the charming youth,
to

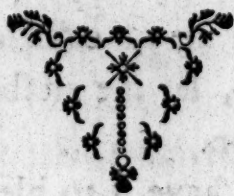
from the Dead to the Living. 71

to whom I was contracted by my parents, detained me with his tears: had angels beckoned me to the skies, that melting language would have tempted me back.

You little think, my dear brother, what regularity of the passions, what sanctity of manners, are necessary to take off the horrors of Death, and make that gloomy monarch wear a smiling aspect.

Take this friendly admonition, and be for ever happy; then will that relation which is now between us still subsist, and I shall be, in joys inexpressible, your sister to all eternity,

SERENA.





LETTER XVII.

*To PHILOCLES, from IBRAHIM a Turkish
Bassa.*

IT was you, my dear *Philocles*, that Heaven made the instrument of my conversion to Christianity: but while I was in a state of mortality, it was impossible for me to know the greatness of my obligations to you, and to what height of felicity your friendly instructions directed me: how low, how disproportioned were my expectations, to the grandeur of my present happiness! how superior is it, even to those noble ideas your description gave me of celestial joys! as you converted me to, let me establish you in, the only true religion.

What reason have I to bless the moment that began our acquaintance, and the event that placed your character to my view, in such an agreeable light! there was indeed something in your whole conduct so artless,
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so sincere, so conformable to the strictest rules of truth and justice, that I at once quitted my prejudices to the faith you avowed: the Christian, (which is not always the case) recommended Christianity.

The negociations I had with you when you were Consul for the States of *Holland* at *Smyrna*, gave me numerous instances of your honest and generous disposition: but nothing surprized me more, than seeing you venture your life in a dreadful storm, to save a *Portuguese* your mortal enemy, whose vessel was just overset, and himself ready to sink amidst the threatening waves, which he till then imagined less his foe than yourself. I was witness to the god-like action, and immediately concluded, that there must be something divine in a religion, that could raise human nature to such an height of beneficence: It was all resistless conviction, my soul confessed its force, while I considered with what a becoming modesty you received the acknowledgements of your adversary, as calmly as for some trifling favour you would have accepted the thanks of your sincerest friend: you seemed conscious of having done nothing extraordinary, nothing but what was suitable

to the constant disposition of your mind, if Heaven had favoured you with more frequent occasions of performing such heroic actions. You have a sense to make what is heroic, *common*.

It was a charity truly divine, that made you hazard your life, and expose it to the worst of torments, to rescue me from error. I was more inquisitive than the laws of the *Alcoran* allowed, which induced me to seek so many opportunities of conversing with you. Without the least caution or regard to your own safety, you left yourself to the mercy of an Infidel, satisfied my scruples, and importuned me to quit the *Mahometan* faith. Your conduct was all demonstration; and convinced me, that nothing but heavenly truth could inspire you with such fortitude, and kindle in your soul a charity so perfectly disinterested: I was soon vanquished, and became a joyful profelyte to the *Christian* principles, nor found the least regret in leaving my native soil, to follow you to the *Hague*, where I might openly profess the faith I had embraced, and be in the right with impunity.

It was not long before a fever seized me: when I found the symptoms mortal, I sent

for

for you to ease my burthened soul of the only care that oppressed it; but before you came my speech was lost: however, the discovery was of such importance, that it still engages my concern; nor is there any person whose fidelity I can depend on like your's.

I purchased a beautiful *Grecian* slave, the first and only object of my love: though she was in my power, I only attempted by gentle methods to gain her affections, but in vain; her *Christian* Belief still set the view of future rewards and punishments before her, and checked her softest inclinations: to conquer her virtue, I was induced to pervert her to the doctrines of the *Alcoran*. As absurdly as I reasoned, she was soon convinced that her soul was as perishing as her body, and that there was no prospect of immortality for any of her sex; that present joys were all she could expect; and in losing youth and love, she lost the highest end of her creation. Too soon the fair Apostate believed my detested doctrines, and took the poison from my tongue, renounced the Great Messiah, and embraced the idle dreams of an Impostor: gave up her claim to immortality, and yielded herself to my licentious

E 2 wishes.

wishes. Thus free from the restraints of religion, the fair libertine grew dissolute and profane beyond the limits of her sex: her sportive wit, and boundless vanity, now ridiculed all that she once thought sacred: there was something so wild, so unnatural in her impiety, that I half repented my success; but never was truly sensible of the injury I had done her, till I was convinced of the truth of *Christianity*. It is this unspeakable damage that I hope you will find some method to repair: it will not be impossible, by some of your friends, to find access to her; she is now at my brother's disposal; her ransom will be easy, and a charity worthy your character. Your *charity* will redeem her person, your *example* her mind, from a more deplorable slavery.

IBRAHIM.





L E T T E R XVIII.

To a Son, from his deceased Father.

IF there is the least spark of filial gratitude in your breast; if there is any deference due to the memory of a once indulgent father, I charge you to recall the challenge you have sent—What shall I say?—not to your adversary, but to your generous, your well-meaning friend: his admonitions were just, and the relation he gave you, undoubted fact: you know in your conscience, the woman you vindicate has neither virtue nor reputation to defend, while you are daring death, and all the horrors that ensue, to justify a known falshood, and purchase *shame* with *Heaven*.

If you are killed in this mad duel, the moment you breathe your last you will mingle with a society that make very different judgments of things, from what pass for maxims of honour among mortals; you will appear with a very ill grace, and on a most im-

pertinent occasion, among the spirits of darkness, to whom you will be an eternal object of derision. The boasted beauty and charms of your mistress, will be but a poor excuse for your gallantry, though you should tell them in heroicks, how *the world has been lost for a woman.*

These extravagancies will vanish with mortality; death will draw the veil, and place more serious scenes in view: you will find how cheaply you have sold immortal glory, and curse the fond enchantment that led you on to destruction; detesting that most, the love of which is now your inducement to ruin.

But ask yourself, What is the virtue of this fine lady, in defence of whom you are going with such bravery to die? What is this honour you are giving up your life and all your hopes of salvation to maintain? This guiltless lovely woman is only perjured to her marriage vows; this angel, this divine creature, does but deceive, does but expose to infamy, the best of husbands; she does but return his unequalled tenderness and constant affection to her, with artful fondness, and dissembled complaisance: she is but insensible

sensible to the merit of a man who is his country's ornament and pride; a person of the most graceful appearance, by nature formed to please the nicest of the fair sex; liberal and magnificent, obliging and sincere above all disguise; and who, from his own conscious honour, entirely confides in this artful woman, whom he raised from distress and obscurity. Charmed with her beauty and dissembled affection for him, he has indulged all her wild ambition, gratified her boundless vanity, and set no more limits to her expences, than you now to your folly.

This is the unhappy man who would expose to the jest of every senseless rake, by a public quarrel for the reputation of his wife. What *enmity* could be so cruel as this *defence*!

And this is the dear innocent charmer, whose virtue you would justify, even by damning yourself, and murdering the generous *Lindamor*, your best, your experienced friend, whose sincerity has been his only crime: be not so shamefully valiant. With what confusion must you draw your sword on a man, to whom you have such a series of obligations? how often has he supplied the necessities to

which your extravagant gaming has reduced you, and discharged your debts of honour, as you call them? and what was his offence now, but setting the character of an infamous woman in its true light, with a kind intention to reclaim you from your dotage?

What a fatal influence has this dissolute passion had on your mind! how profligate your manners! how unlike to the first part of your life, when a noble inclination governed your soul, and the lovely *Erminia* was all your joy! Oh! may her youthful charms recover you, and animate your mind to glorious actions! your King, your country, the *Protestant* cause, the rights and liberties of human nature, now require your courage, and find better employment for your sword than to assassinate your friends. If you are truly brave, have the *courage* to submit; the only way to conquer him.

EUSEBIUS.





L E T T E R X I X .

To my Lord —, from his deceased Wife.

YOUR present confinement by a slow recovery from a dangerous sickness, makes me hope this may prove a time to prevail with you, to pity the injured *Sylviana*, and be just to your obligations to her.

You once loved me, my Lord; and while I lived, the guiltless passion had an effect on your whole conduct: but your grief for me, gave a very extravagant turn to your mind, and instead of leading you to a superior, a reasonable happiness, you have abandoned yourself to the heights of sensuality; you have pursued pleasure, in every tempting disguise; refined on vice, and turned it into a science; and are too truly learned in it: your stately rooms have sounded with nightly revels, and loose enchanting songs; your groves and fragrant gardens have been devoted to luxury and infamous delights; the shades and fountains have been witness to scenes unbecoming their chaste retreats; and

have found out new ways to perdition, and set no limits to your dissolute inclinations, which survive *satiety* itself.

But under this gay disguise, this triumph of vanity and madness, you have not known an interval of happiness that has been sincere; you could not conquer your own good sense, nor wholly forget the restraints of a noble education. I have been witness to your secret remorse, your penitent soliloquies: I have seen you recollect yourself, assume your native greatness; heard you with the most moving eloquence lament your folly, and assent to all the rules of temperance and virtue; assent to, and violate the same hour.

You have relapsed to your usual extravagance, till this dangerous sickness set the terrors of death in your view: it was then you confessed your injustice to the charming *Sylviana*: it hung on your soul, and appeared with a thousand aggravations; nor will you ever know peace, till you have confirmed your vows, and the absolute obligations you are under to marry her. Obligations to be happy, methinks, should be easily complied with.

How

How happy was the lovely maid in her humble circumstances! how blessed in her spotless innocence! till chance (in your rural excursions) led you in a luckless hour to the verdant shade, where you found her retired to screen herself from the mid-day sun, unmolested with the cares of love or ambition.

The natural elegance, the modesty, and easiness of her behaviour, fired your thoughts, and partly by violence, and partly by the most solemn vows of marriage, you ruined her.

But what unaffected sorrow, what remorse that fatal moment cost her, you have often witnessed; with what graceful pride has she since refused the least favour, and been inflexible to your soft persuasions, on any terms, but the marriage you promised her? how moving have her tears been! how just her complaints! what a pomp of virtue, what a conscious greatness has appeared in her aspect, when by your artful addresses you have again endeavoured to seduce her! nor presents, nor equipage, nor the most profuse settlement you have offered her, has tempted her to act in any character, but what virtue might own, in the view of Heaven and the world. Her very crime with you, should have the force of virtue in it.

Your quality, my Lord, does not absolve you from the divine laws, nor give a sanction to perjury, but rather enforces the obligation of equity and truth. In real merit the fair *Sylviana* is not your inferior; but if she were, Heaven does not dispense with the rules of justice on the account of airy titles, and imaginary distinctions of birth: the highest satisfaction that you can make, may perhaps never give her that tranquility she enjoyed in her first humble circumstances: could you restore her lost innocence, she would be more blessed in that, than in all the grandeur to which you can raise her: you may alleviate her misfortune, you cannot make full amends.

Nor can the loss of a tender parent be repaired. With a modest ingenuity the injured nymph confessed her crime to her pious mother, who was so oppressed with the thought of such an infamy, that in a few weeks she expired, and left her beauteous daughter to weep out her solitary hours. Her distress demands your compassion; and by an act of justice to her, you will secure your future peace and happiness, and shew your gratitude to

MARIANA.



L E T T E R X X.

To VARRIUS.

YOU have soon forgot my dying admonitions, and the promise you made me, to quit the guilty amour you are still pursuing. Can you with deliberation, with reflection, proceed in a design which must, if you succeed, plunge the beautiful *Cleora* in guilt and infamy, whom you love? what could hatred do more?

But with what horror ought you to reflect on the injury you are doing to the generous *Alphonsus*, your benefactor! is there nothing engaging in those titles? or rather, are they not words of the most sacred importance? make it not the future interest of mankind to be your foes.

A man of your pretended honour could not bear the reproach of a lie, and yet you are acting a lie; practising the vilest treachery, and exposing a person of merit to ridicule. This, however unjust, must be the

consequence of your success, while he, secure in his own worth and integrity, continues to caress the wretch that injures him. How can you support the stings of his kindness to you?

To this injured, this generous man, you owe the height of your fortune: it was his interest alone that brought you into public trust and reputation: to requite him you are violating all the laws of humanity, bringing infamy on his family, and secretly endeavouring to rival him in the affections of his charming wife, the object of all his virtuous joys; of which, from whom could he more properly exact the protection, than from you?

Can you unmoved recall the distress into which a crime of this nature plunged my heedless youth? what remorse, what confusion, a moment's madness cost me! you was the only confidant to whom I discovered the secret wound it gave my bleeding soul.

But how fatal was that one fall of an extravagant passion to all my future repose! despair and horror filled my breast, when I considered the injury I had done was beyond reparation: retirement was no more
my

my sanctuary from the noisy crowd, the image of my crime pursued me with inexpressible terrors; the innocent diversions of life were tasteless, musick and wit had lost their charms; the proposals of pleasure were like jests to dying men, like recreations to the damned: whatever decency appeared in my public behaviour, you were witness to the private intervals of my grief, and gave some relief to my anguish, by hearing my complaints with an obliging attention: but nature, after all its efforts, sunk; the pride of my youth yielded to the gloomy distemper: yet the sincerity of my repentance found acceptance: and, as my last hour approached, some propitious spirit breathed peace and divine consolation to my soul, and in these gentle whispers reproved my infidelity.

*Why should presumptuous man, with feeble doubt,
And impotence of thought, mark out the bounds
Of clemency divine?—What tongue shall dare
Pronounce with impious vanity these words?*

“Thus far, nor farther, thy exulting waves,

“O thou abyss of sacred love! shall roll;

“Here thy triumphant billows shall retire,

“Nor pass the bounds of human diffidence.”

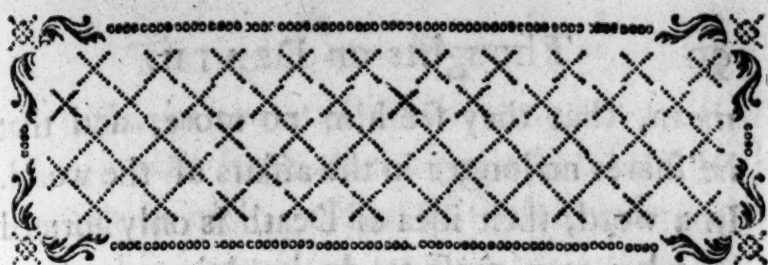
But

But however serene the last scene of my life was, I would not, for all the joys the lower creation could give, endure the distraction and remorse that one error cost me. Are you softened at the complaints of my misery? be terrified at the approaches of your own.

Thus warned, I hope you will retire: a thousand accidents have hitherto prevented your guilt, and crossed the madness of your love: some pause of reason, some effort of virtue, may at last recover you from the paths of ruin. Comply with reason and virtue, with honour and friendship, with your own happiness and that of others; with the interest of the *living*, and the desires of the *dead*.

THEODOSIUS.





T H O U G H T S

O N

D E A T H.

Translated from

The M O R A L E S S A Y S of Messieurs
de P O R T - R O Y A L.

 Beyond the address which men have never to think of Death but as at a very great distance, nor to view it but in some other person, without putting themselves one moment in the place of the *dying*; they have yet a farther art to delude themselves, by forming such a general and confused idea, as conceals from them all that is most terrible in Death: they conceive little else of this state, but as a privation of sense, and a separation from the commerce of life; so that when they say, a man is dead, they only mean,

mean, that they see him no more, and that he shares no longer in the affairs of the world. In a word, their idea of Death is only formed on what men cease to do in dying, and not on what they begin to do and feel, though it be that which constitutes its most dreadful circumstance.

Death is indeed a privation of life and human action, but it is a privation which is felt, and produces surprizing effects in the soul. In order to comprehend these effects, it is necessary to consider, that while the soul is united to the body, its attention is divided by divers kinds of sensations, imaginations and passions; it feels the objects which act on the body, according to their different manner of influence; and these different ways of perceiving are called sensations: on these the soul forms its ideas of all things to which it is united by its passions, and is always employed about these objects; and not only employed, but leans and reposes on them, when it is not entirely united to God: For not being made with a capacity to sustain itself, the soul necessarily seeks some foreign support. It was formed to know and love, but finding nothing with-
in

Thoughts on D E A T H. 91

in sufficient to satisfy these inclinations, it is forced with some other objects to fill the void it finds in itself. Some of these objects make agreeable impressions on the sense, others content our curiosity and vanity ; others relieve the mind, by turning it from things which appear disgusting ; some nourish its hopes, while others fortify it against its fears. The soul inclines to all the objects of sense, and is engaged and supported by them, in such a manner, that it cannot prove a separation without pain and emotion.

We are not always sensible of these ties, but the soul begins to feel them, when it comes to be separated from what it loves : It has then a sense of the privation, proportionable to its union with them : So true is that maxim of Saint *Augustine*, “ ’Tis impossible to lose any thing without sorrow, “ but what we possess without passion.”

There are few persons free from an infinite number of these engagements ; and though we are ignorant of them, till an actual separation discovers what they are, we may nevertheless conceive something, by separating ourselves from them in our thoughts, and imagining we are deprived of them by some accident.

For

92 Thoughts on D E A T H.

For instance, take a person who does not seem to place his happiness in the objects of Sight, and fancies they contribute nothing to the tranquillity of his mind; and suppose him suddenly deprived of his Sight, though in all other circumstances happy, we should find him affected with the loss, as the greatest misfortune. The sight of mankind gives us some consolation, because we always discover in them a certain appearance of compassion, capable to give us succour in our necessities; which at least indulges our hopes, and those hopes excite a kind of secret joy.

The objects, which in some respects are disgusting to the soul, and raise its fears and aversion, yet in other views fail not to sustain it. For though these uneasy passions cannot be altogether appeased, yet the imagination always furnishes them with means or hopes that quiet them; while the pursuit of these means, or the hopes of arriving at the end of their desires, employ and divert the mind.

All the objects to which the soul is joined, by the senses, imagination, reason, or passions, are its goods and riches; and even those we call poor, abound in these sort of goods: If they want palaces, or even a cottage,

tage, they have the sky, the sun, and stars, of which the prospect is so magnificent, that St. *Augustine* says, "It is a greater blessing for the poor to behold the heavenly luminaries, than for the rich to view their golden roofs."

Thus in the privation of some advantages we comfort ourselves with others, true or false, that we either possess or hope for. As the Body always finds something to bear it, since even when through weariness it falls to the ground, it there finds a support: So the soul, sick and feeble, never fails of something to sustain it; and when there is nothing real, forms imaginary supports, on which (vain as they are) it leans.

This necessity of human consolations is not peculiar to vicious men; in some degree, the virtuous want their relief: There are few persons so perfect, but they have still some remaining tie to the world; fatigued by a long attention to spiritual objects, they are forced, in divers instances, to abandon themselves, and fly for satisfaction to their friends, their children, their estates, to a field of their own planting, or an edifice of their own raising.

This

94 Thoughts on D E A T H.

This is the condition of Man in this life, which may help us to comprehend what Death is, with the effects it produces. We ought to look on it as the rupture of all that unites us to the creatures; a general separation from the objects of sense; the cancelling all human ties, and every pleasure the soul found in them; with a total privation of what it loved and enjoyed on earth: When a man dies, he loses not only what he called his wealth, but the firmament, the sun, the stars, the air, the earth, and all the rest of nature; he loses his body, and all those sensations that gave him pleasure; he loses his relations, his friends, and all mankind; he loses all relief, all support; and in short, all the objects of his senses and passions.

Indeed, if the soul, in some degree united to these, finds itself also united to God by a holy love, though the privation of the creatures causes some emotion, yet it sinks not into despair: For this divine principle sustains it, and growing more active, confirms its hopes of being shortly united to, and overwhelmed in that abyss of pleasure, which alone can satisfy all its capacity of loving.

But

But who is able to conceive the state of the miserable soul, when it comes by death to be rent from all the objects of its inclinations; from all that sustained it during life, and finds nothing in itself, on which to lean: its propensities to love, and enjoy what it loved, become beyond comparison more lively and ardent, while all the soul was fond of escapes, and flies before her with an everlasting flight, without leaving the least hope of fruition; she loses all, finds nothing, all sinks under her, all vanishes, and disappears for ever.

It is not possible in this world to comprehend a state so perfectly miserable; all one can say, to give some idea of it, is this:— 'Tis a terrible fall of the soul, by a sudden removal of all its supports; 'tis an horrible famine, by a privation of its nourishment; 'tis an infinite void, by the annihilation of all that filled it; 'tis an extreme poverty, by the intire loss of that which was its wealth; 'tis a ghastly solitude, by the separation it finds itself in from all union and society; 'tis a dreadful desolation, by the want of all consolation; 'tis a cruel rupture, which violently rends the soul from every object of its love.



LETTERS

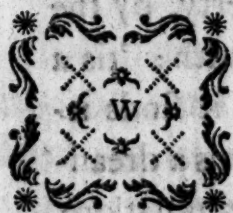
MORAL and ENTERTAINING.

PART I.

LETTER I.

*From PHILARIO, to his Friend, relating
his unhappy Amour with AMASIA.*

My dear CHAMONT,



Whatever reproaches my past follies have deserved, I know my present misfortunes will raise your compassion.—The gentle *Amasia* is no more, she expired in my arms, and I have paid the last rites to her memory.

Your

Your suspicions were just, that I had perverted and secretly kept her, contrary to all the friendly admonitions you gave me. The spring of my misery was my father's marrying me at twelve years old, (O cursed avarice!) to a Girl of ten, only to secure her vast fortune to his family. As I grew old, instead of liking, I conceived an unconquerable aversion to the innocent creature; but no arguments could prevail with my father to break the contract, and I was as obstinate never to complete the marriage. Thus entangled, I grew uneasy, which my Sister observing, to divert my chagrin, often carried me with her to visit a young Lady, descended from a good family, but decayed in fortune, and obscure: Having never met her before in any public place, I was surprized at the sight of such an accomplished beauty, which her fine genius, and a thousand elegancies in her conversation, still heightened. Here the guilty inclination began; which, never presaging its fatal event, I cherished and resolved to be happy, in spite of the incumbrance of my young wife, who, without any matrimonial cares at heart, diverted herself with her babies and play-

VOL. I. F things;

things; while I, privileged by my Sister's discretion and intimacy, continued my visits to *Amasia*, whom we always found with her mother, the pious and discreet *Sophronia*, whose only fault was being a little too reserved and severe in her temper. But *Amasia* had a natural disposition to books and solitude, with a temper rather serious and pensive, than gay; which made the strictness of her mother's conduct and her own confinement easy: The little society she had, was with some grave and good women of *Sophronia*'s acquaintance, who took care to inform her, that all the men of the present age were rakes and atheists, and the young women no better, nor hardly so good as they should be; and that conversing with such sage persons as themselves, was the most reputable thing she could do. *Amasia* assented to these wise maxims, my sister and I being the only acquaintance of a modern character that were admitted to the house. I made myself so agreeable to *Sophronia*, that I got the office of Reader to the family; but, to my secret mortification, instead of Plays, she confined me to History or Sermons, tho' my accent was better suited to the stage than the

the pulpit : However, my fair audience were pleased and attentive, and I would rather have taken Orders than have lost my employment. But it was not long before cautious *Sophronia* saw through the disguise of my zeal ; and observing a greater gaiety than was usual to *Amasia's* temper, in conversing with me, she told my sister freely her suspicions, intreating her as she valued her daughter's reputation, to bring me no more with her. My sister, who was perfectly virtuous, was alarmed at the discovery, and would never, from that time, suffer me to accompany her.

I had now no way to let *Amasia* know the violence of my passion, but by a letter, which unluckily fell into her mother's hands ; by this confirmed in her fears, she charged *Amasia*, as she expected her blessing, to send back any future billet from me unopened ; this severe injunction she punctually obeyed till her mother's death, which happened in the midst of this adventure : She was suddenly seized, and finding her sickness mortal, she took the weeping fair by the hand, demanding, as the last proof of her duty, that she would, in the presence of the all-
F 2
seeing

seeing Deity, promise never to converse with me, or receive my addresses.

This *Amasia* could not deny a dying tender parent: But oh! how fatal to herself and me was this engagement! how wild was my grief when my sister informed me of the cruel obligation! However, I waited till the formalities of sorrow due to her mother's memory were past; when with the impatience of love I hastened to her house, and bribing her servant, got admittance, without *Amasia's* knowledge, to her chamber.

Never did her charms appear to such advantage: The soft surprize, the modest confusion, the struggle between a tender inclination, and the restraint of conscious honour, gave her a thousand nameless graces; whether the yielding beauty, with a gentle languishment, betray'd the passion she had long disguised, or whether, recovering herself with all the pomp of virtue she reproached my attempt, still she put on resistless charms; but in every transporting variety of her temper, I saw my own advantage, nor left the conquest unfinished. With deep repentance I now confess, it gave me an impious pleasure to find love triumphant over
all

all the pride of virtue; but Heaven soon avenged its cause, and humbled me in the height of my successful insolence.

I had not long continued my visits to *Amassa*, but an affair of consequence required my absence for some weeks; in the mean time, she was seized with a fever: As she found the symptoms mortal, she wrote, and immediately sent me this Letter.

My dear PHILARIO,

WHERE are those ages of love, that heaven and eternal series of tranquillity and joy, with which you profanely flattered me? The bright delusion, the visionary paradise, is already lost; my sun is setting at noon, an untimely evening draws its shadows over all my promised joys.

That immortal bloom, those heavenly charms, that you told me might bid defiance to sickness and age, are already blasted by a cruel disease: A sudden autumn has withered my prime; the lilies droop, the roses die, chilling winter has faded my youthful spring.—But a few days more, and I am dust.

This truth sits heavy on my soul, and brings my guilt with its full aggravation in view: my mother's dying admonitions, my broken vows, terrify me to distraction. My crime was not the effect of ignorance or inadvertency; pitying Angels set the penalties of eternal damnation and the recompence of an immortal crown, in prospect before me; the caverns of death disclosed their terrors, and the realms of celestial light opened their glories to my active imagination: I was forewarned by the advice of a dying parent, of the infamy and ruin, to which this soft temptation has betrayed me: I had experienced the satisfaction of reason and virtue; but for you I ventured on present and future perdition, and gave up my title to all the joys of immortality: And now, ye regions of divine delight, you have no attractions for a mind so impure; I would only fly to you, as a retreat from infernal misery.

And yet, too charming youth! you engage my affections; I would live, but (O fatal madness!) I would live for you: by you I was seduced, but oh! may your soul stand clear of my ruin! It is myself, not you I would accuse.

Last night, (if waking or in a dream I am uncertain) my mother's venerable shade, majestic

jestic in heavenly splendour, appeared to me, and bid me Prepare for the silent tomb!—What preparation can I make? What penitence can atone for repeated perjury? for crimes against the clearest convictions of heavenly light, and the sanction of voluntary vows?

What figures of speech could you make use of to take off from vices like these their deformity? What eloquence did you employ thus to pervert my judgment? By what infernal enchantment was I led on to mine own destruction?—You have undone me, but I am hopeless! Can you make no reparation? Cannot you reverse the injury, and talk as well in the cause of heaven, as you did in the interest of hell?—Oh make the compassionate trial!—Can you pray?—Can you implore mercy for me? Persuasion dwell upon your tongue! Could you be sincere, heaven perhaps may bear!—My strength is spent!—I faint!—Fly to my assistance, that at least I may take a last farewell.

AMASIA.

This Letter surprized and distracted me; I knew not what I did or said, but I ordered my horses, and returned with all the speed

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A M A S I A.

This Letter surprized and distracted me; I knew not what I did or said, but I ordered my horses, and returned with all the speed

that love could give me, to the idol of my soul, whom I found by intervals in her perfect senses, but in the agonies of death.

The melancholy scene will never quit my memory : Death came, attended by his real and fantastic horrors ; he made his approach with every circumstance terrible to nature or reason : never was the passage to his waste dominions more gloomy ; never did a departing spirit quit the light of heaven with more reluctance !

Ob ! she cried, grasping my hand, whither am I going ? to what unknown regions ? On what desolate coasts am I doomed eternally to wander ? How dark the entrance, how long the passage that opens before me !——See yonder sullen ghost beckons me away !——another pale spectre summons me to the grave, and bids me mingle with the dead.——How my senses wander !——O for a month's, a week's, an hour's reprieve ! Then, fixing her eager eyes on mine, she asked, Cannot you procure this for me, after all your boasted love ?——I am cited to the supreme tribunal.——Have you the hardiness to appear for me ?——The whole creation cannot aid me in this extremity ! After which she lay long speechless and convulsed,

vulsed, and casting a dismal glance at me, with a heavy groan expired.

I could not refuse this sad recital to your request, and my avowed confidence in you: It is some kind of relief to pour my grief into your bosom, and to excite in your's a generous compassion, which I know you feel for

The wretched PHILARIO.





LETTER II.

From CASSANDER, to a Gentleman at Venice, relating the murder of his Friend.

My dear Friend,

O H! why do I profane that sacred title! If you knew me, you would start, as if the fiends below had given you that appellation. ——— But I must unmask myself whatever horror the monstrous appearance gives you: Perhaps some sparks of pity may mingle with your aversion, when you find my misery bears some proportion to my guilt.

Oh, think what it is!—Imagine the dreadful scene I would unveil—recall the most tragical action that was ever represented on the stage; or the most bloody effect of fury, that has been really perpetrated in human life.

Why

Why do not the tears that fall from my eyes stain the paper with a sanguine hue? Why does not blood instead of ink flow from my pen in dismal characters, to mark my crime? Why should I express myself in the language of men, and not invoke the infernal furies to teach me their dialect, that I may give my guilt its proper Aggravation? for mine's a deed of darkness, fit for the records of hell —— Murder! —— execrable murder! —— This cursed hand, that trembles every nerve to relate it, gave the deadly wound! —— Horror! —— confusion! —— scarce can I refrain by the wildest imprecations to hasten that vengeance, at which I tremble:——it will fall too soon, and with some terrible distinction: for mine was a sin of a superior note, marked with uncommon malignity.

In vain am I acquitted at a human tribunal, by the partiality of justice, and the solicitations of powerful friends, while by my own conscience, and the divine laws, I am evidently condemned. What plea shall I find against the reproaches of my own reason, that restless monitor within? To what shelter

shall I fly from unerring Justice?—Hide me, ye rocks! cover me, ye mountains, from the pursuit of eternal vengeance!

My sin was an outrage against nature, a defiance of all the laws of friendship and humanity.—You dare not believe me, when I tell you it was my friend:—Oh distracting thought!—my friend!—the young, the gentle *Antonio*, that I murdered!—I see him fall!—I see him bleed!—The soul sits quivering on his lips, his eye-balls roll in death!—I beheld the gaping wound, the last convulsive pangs, the pale and senseless corpse extended on the ground! the dreadful scene is for ever new, and rises before me with insulting horror. The visionary terrors haunt my solitary retreats, and damp the joy of society: my days are unacquainted with peace, my nights with rest; the whole creation is an undistinguished Chaos; the skies have lost their light, the fields their verdure; every charm is blotted from the face of nature, the sweetest odours no more refresh me, harmony with its soothing tones no more delights, I sicken at the most luxurious banquets, the richest wines.

wines have lost their flavour ; beauty no more invites, nor pleasure with her softest eloquence allures me.

Those fair gardens, where art and nature combine to rival all that has been fabled of the vale of *Tempe*, or the *Cyprian* groves, these soft retreats, which were late my pride and delight, now yield a gloomy prospect, and look like the seats of desolation and despair : for here the bloody fact was done ; here I violated nature's great original law, defied eternal justice, and sealed my own perdition.

You know with what frenzy I doated on the artful *Marcella* ; she was the idol of my thoughts : With her I spent my gay licentious hours, regardless of my honour, my country, or my friends ; for her I contrived gardens of pleasure, opened crystal fountains, raised bowers perfumed with every fragrant blossom, to entertain her : nor once believed she could be capable of ingratitude, till that fatal night when I surprized her with the unhappy *Antonio*.

I returned more early than usual from an appointed debauch, and not finding *Marcella* in her apartment, I ran immediately into a
private

private garden, where she sometimes took an evening walk. The moon shone clear, and at the entrance of an arbour, I saw her sitting with *Antonio*, loosely reclining his head in her lap: He rose, and came forward smiling, whether with an air of insult or raillery, I did not stay to consider; but flushed with wine, and enraged with jealousy, I drew my sword, and stabbed him through the heart, while *Marcella* in a swoon lay cold and senseless at my feet.

My rage was spent in a moment, my amorous flame extinguished, and friendship with all its force returned triumphant on my soul: I threw myself on the ground by the dying youth, supported and embraced him, melted into tears, and called aloud on his pity to forgive me: my servants were alarmed, and rushing into the garden beheld the bloody scene.

By this time *Marcella* was recovered from her swoon, and reproached my rashness, assuring me she had employed all her art to persuade him to comply with that fatal assignation; she frankly owned he had been long the object of her fondest desires, but that till then he had refused any secret appointment.

pointment with her, from a sense of friendship to me, and justice to his young and beautiful wife, whom he sincerely loved.

This discovery distracted me: I cursed myself and her, and charged her to fly my sight for ever, lest I should double my guilt, and inure myself to murder. I was so far from endeavouring to escape the rigour of the law, that I challenged it, called aloud for the ministers of Justice, witnessed against my own life, and avowed the barbarous fact. But however I was cleared by a human verdict, I stand condemned by a higher and more righteous decision: My conscience tells me,

——— *The door is shut,
The judge has pass'd my everlasting doom,
Which all created pow'r can ne'er reverse:
My day's for ever gone, my sun is set
In final darkness, ne'er to rise again;
My summer's spent, eternal winter's come;
The season's past. ———*

*On me no ray of mercy e'er will shine,
No smiling beam of hope will ever rise;
Justice divine, and self-condemning guilt,
Consign me over to eternal woe.*

What

What repentance is there for a wretch who can make no restitution ? The injury I have done can never be cancelled ; it was desperate, it was irreparable mischief, that I brought on the wretched *Antonio* : I cut off his space of trial, his probation for immortal joys, and tore him from all his future hopes of salvation : I perhaps surprized him with all his sins and unrepented follies on his head ; his guilt might that instant be in its fullest magnitude, while I, with a more than infernal rage, seized the cursed moment, and sent an immortal spirit to hell. He may now be loading me with execrations, and sounding revenge thro' the caverns of darkness, against a miscreant that barred the gates of bliss, and opened his passage to the dungeons of misery, and endless despair.

These are the horrible images that haunt, and sometimes drive me to the precipice of ruin. Last night, in a dead and silent hour, I took my sword, and went softly into my garden, resolving to stab myself, (so wild are the intervals of my grief) on the same place where I murdered my friend : when I came near, I saw, or my fancy only made it real, a ghastly phantom resembling the murdered

Antonio,

Antonio, standing on the very spot where I gave the fatal thrust; his countenance wan and doleful, his motionless eyes fixed full on mine, while his hand pointed to the well-imitated wound on his breast.

The sight withered my strength, and the sword dropped from my trembling hand; guilt made me a coward, and with a childish fear I hastily retired to my chamber, calling one of my servants to attend me. So unlike am I grown to myself, I start at a shadow, and shudder at the presage of a dream, am surrounded with ill omens, and tormented with more direful forebodings within.

We talk of racks, of hissing snakes, and gnawing worms; but all the emphasis of human language cannot describe the tortures of an accusing conscience. The united force of art and nature cannot yield the least relief: The light of Paradise could not cheer me; the songs of angels would but heighten my remorse, and augment the exquisite anguish; the gloom of impenetrable night, and the sound of eternal tempests, would sooner sooth these unutterable agonies.

What privilege is my being? why am I cursed with immortality? Oh that my severe
judge

judge, my omnipotent adversary, would speak me again into my primitive *nothing*, and with one potent word finish my existence !

*The beasts are happy, they come forth and keep
Short watch on earth, and then lie down to sleep:
Pain is for Man, and oh ! how vast a pain
For crimes that made the Godhead bleed in vain !*

Dr. YOUNG.

But why do I think it vain for me ? Am I of all human race exempted ? Am I the only distinguished sinner excluded from the benefit of that infinite atonement ? Am I on earth, or shut up in the infernal prison ? Oh stay, thou glimmering beam of hope, with one heavenly visit cheer my benighted soul. An uncertain *if*, a flattering *possibility*, would be a momentary Heaven to me ; it would be redemption from hell, pardon to a reprobate spirit. And yet,

*If I must perish, prostrate at thy feet
The humble victim of thy wrath shall fall,
Imploring mercy still ; for mercy reigns
Triumphant in thy nature : 'tis thy boast ;
The attribute that reigns on this side hell.*

My

Moral and Entertaining. 115

My dear *Clerimont*, excuse my freedom; it is natural for misery to complain: Had I been acquainted with a person of more piety and generous compassion than yourself, I had spared you the reading of this melancholy relation, to which your long stay at *Venice* has made you a stranger.

Adieu. I know you will pity

The wretched CASSANDER.





LETTER III.

*To BELINDA, from SYLVIA, to inform her
of the reasons of her suddem retreat into the
country.*

MY dear BELINDA, I am indeed got
back again,

*To harmless plain-work, and to croaking rooks,
Old-fashion'd balls, dull aunts, and godly books.*

Mr. POPE.

To a view of nature in that simplicity which
you rally so agreeably : But it is here I have
recovered my peace, and am again grown a
reasonable creature ; to which^o those godly
books that you seem to have such a notion of,
have very much contributed, particularly Bi-
shop Tillotson.

I see you smile, not in malice, but good
nature, at the sober confession, and want of
delicacy in the choice of my reading : It di-

verts

verts you, I know, that I should let *Dryden* and *Otway* lie stupidly by me, and impertinently spend an hour in reading a Sermon; that when I am so well at ease in this world, it should ever enter into my head to think of another; and that, in the bloom of eighteen, I should have such a gloomy disposition, as to think myself mortal: And, if you will forgive me, I will own, that I sometimes read the Bible, in contempt of all modern refinements, and hope to form my life on that antiquated scheme. These are, I confess, my dear *Belinda*, a very unfashionable set of thoughts, and have nothing in them modish or polite.

I believe you will be very inquisitive to find what has put these odd, these strange unaccountable whimsies into my brain.

'Tis love, (you start—you pity—you pray for me) but it is love, a tender hopeless passion, that has had this surprizing effect! It is an absolute despair of being happy in this world, that has put me on endeavours to secure the happiness of the next: Could I have possess'd the idol of my soul, I had been at rest, and had lost the relish of superior joys.

But

But mine, with confusion I own it, was a criminal affection forbid by earth and heaven; my bliss was prohibited by laws human and divine. This confession will surprize you, but could you know the severity of my conduct, you would excuse me. I have torn myself from the sight of the lovely youth for ever, though I could have lost the light of the sun with less reluctance. My hasty retreat into the country was free and voluntary; and not, as was thought, the effect of my father's command. I was sincere, heaven is my witness, in my desire to free myself from the criminal passion, and I thought the most certain way to conquest, was by flight.

You know the tour my brother made to *Paris*, brought him acquainted with *Monsieur le Comte de R——*; and when he came into *England*, my brother returned with his family: I was in town, and waited on *Madame le Comtesse*, who did me the honour to detain me some time with her.

Monsieur le Comte was one of the handsomest and best-bred men in the world, and had as much of the *English* gravity as was agreeable to my own temper; which made me find his conversation very grateful and entertaining:

ing: nor had I the least suspicion that there was any hazard in such a harmless satisfaction. I had conversed in town with as much freedom as a virtuous education allowed, and kept an equal indifference, without the least inclination to love, or even pretending to hate any mortal man.

The *Comte* was perfectly well-bred, and my vanity made me interpret every little turn of gallantry, as the mark of some peculiar value and innocent friendship he had for me. Any other thought would have shock'd my delicacy, and put me on my guard, against the guilty passion I found kindling in my own breast; which, instead of opposing, I indulged as gratitude, and a just sense of merit.

But I was soon sensible of the delusion, and how easily vice betrays an unguarded mind, under the specious disguise of virtue. I found this freedom of conversation would prove fatal to all the peace and innocence of my mind, which had now lost its native calmness, and I began to experience all the fantastic effects of spleen, vapours, caprice; in short, an uneasiness with myself, and every thing

thing else in the world, the charming *Comte* herself not excepted.

But this set my guilt before me in its full aggravation. Envy and deceit had till now been strangers to my breast, which made me start at the monstrous forms: every new favour from *Madam le Comtesse* reproached me with violating the trust and confidence she had in my truth and virtue, and for having a wish that *she* had been less beautiful and deserving. The affection and intimacy with which she treated me, gave me an horror for myself, and I was again generous and sincere, and, as I thought, perfectly confirmed in virtue, till the charming *Comte* appeared, when I found myself jealous, unjust, and perverted to vice in a moment.

However, I disguised my folly, from a secret delicacy in point of reputation, and an unaffected sense of honour. I am ashamed to tell you I had a thought that needed a disguise, though it was involuntary and unallowed: but I was an ill dissembler, and have some reason to believe the real disposition of my heart was perceived by the *Comte*, who one evening surprized me reclined on the side of a fountain, repeating these lines:

*Come, blest religion, with thy angel's face,
 Dispel this gloom, and brighten all the place!
 Drive this destructive passion from my breast,
 Compose my sorrows, and restore my rest!
 Shew me the path the sainted-virgins trod,
 Wean me from earth, and raise my soul to God!
 No more let guilty love my heart inflame!*

The *Comte* understood *English* perfectly well: but I recovered myself with as good a grace as I could, and put on more gaiety and assurance than was indeed natural to my disposition; and to conceal my disorder, left him with precipitancy, and returned to the *Comtesse*, who was in her apartment, reading the story of *Rhetea* in the *Life of Cyrus*; she asked me, *How I liked it?* The question, I am persuaded, was accidental; but with some confusion, I answered, *That I thought it well told.* However, it awakened my remorse, and gave me an exquisite sense of the injustice of my secret inclinations.

From this moment I resolved to go back into the country, to conceal and conquer my folly. The tenderness and unaffected concern the *Comtesse* expressed in parting with me, confirmed my virtue, and gave me a secret

confusion for the injustice of having wished her less happy. The calmness and sanctity of my soul seemed to be restored, and I had left the place a conqueror, if the *Comte* had not led me to the coach, and by an accidental sigh, and a sort of a serious air in his face, given my mind a softer turn, and convinced me of the vanity of human confidence, and that I had triumphed without a victory.

But the retirement of the country, and serious reflection, soon freed me from the tumultuous effects of a guilty passion : the scene altered with infinite advantage, and all grew peaceful and serene. I am now reconciled to myself, and find an ineffable satisfaction in the silent approbation of my own conduct ; a satisfaction superior to all the empty applause of the crowd. I reflect with pleasure on the happy change : My soul seems now in its proper situation, and, conscious of its dignity, looks above this world for its rest and happiness : I am almost in a state of insensibility, with regard to mortal things, and have fixed my views on those infinite delights, which will be the certain rewards of virtue.

What

*What is there here to fill these vast desires?
Should fancy all her dazzling scenes display,
Our wishes unconfin'd, would wander still
Beyond the limits of these narrow skies,
In search of boundless and immortal joys.*

Adieu, my dear *Belinda* : As long as I leave you to the quiet possession of the dear town and its dear joys, you will not envy me all that a gay imagination can form of future pleasures.—I have trusted you with the inmost secrets of my soul, and know I can depend upon your fidelity. I am

Your unalterable Friend,

SYLVIA.

See the sequel of this story in LETTER V. PART II.





LETTER IV.

To EUSEBIUS, *from a Deist.*

WHERE shall I find rest? The wide creation denies it. I have run thro' all the varieties of human folly, and searched every vanity below the sun: I have tried what was to be found in madness; women, wine, and frolic have divided my hours; and I am now trying what satisfaction wisdom and philosophy can yield. You have made me at last a convert to natural religion, and turned me into a sort of a virtuous heathen: Morality in its practice is no longer my aversion; I begin to think reason and immortality the highest advantages of humanity. That there is a GOD, all nature cries aloud through all her works; and while I am attending those sacred dictates, in such raptures as these I often address myself,

To the unknown GOD.

*Whate'er thou art, thou excellence unknown!
'Tis thee thro' all thy various works we seek:
These*

*These secret languishments, these fierce desires,
Howe'er licentious, free and unconfin'd,
Pursue unseen an object infinite;
Thro' ev'ry fair disguise the leading GOD
Allures our eager souls: That rosy blush,
Those sparkling eyes, and soft enchanting smiles,
Receiv'd their charms from thee: Beauty is thine:
In all its conquering powers: In thee
We trace up pleasure to its sacred source.*

*We meet thee in the balmy western breeze,
The fragrance of the spring, the spicy isles;
And all Arabia breathes its sweets from thee.
From harmony to harmony we rise,
To that superior skill which tun'd the spheres,
Gave melody to Gabriel's heavenly lyre,
And ev'ry moving grace to Rolli's song.*

*Whatever sacred force in music lies,
The dying strain that calms the wildest care,
Or loftier note that prompts to glorious deeds;
Th' inspiring GOD dwells in the mystic sound,
And charms and captivates the list'ning soul,
Thro' all her soft capacities of joy.*

*But what art thou, the secret spring of life,
Supreme in all perfections, tho' unknown?
More lovely than the fairest of thy works;
For thou art still beyond similitude.*

*Still rising with distinguish'd eminence,
In perfect beauty and unrivall'd glory.*

*But what those beauties, what those glories are,
No mortal eye has seen, nor boldest flight
Of fancy in her gayest scenes conceiv'd.*

*Some soft celestial echoes from afar,
Some glimm'ring rays, with a reflected light,
Attract our souls, and kindle warm desires ;
Impetuous wishes and aspiring hopes,
Which own no bounds, but infinitely free,
Break thro' created limits with contempt,
And seek the great original of bliss.*

*But, oh ! if Love—if Love's the boasted name,
And darling attribute, reveal thyself,
Unfold the heav'nly wonders of thy face,
And stand in open majesty confess'd !*

*Why was I form'd with these aspiring
thoughts,
And elegant desires, these boundless aims,
That reach at nothing short of GOD himself ?
If 'tis a bliss impossible to man ;
If thou wilt never fill these vast desires,
Why were they rais'd ? this eminence of thought
Is but my torment.—Oh ! recall again
This glorious curse, this thankless gift, my reason !
This immortality, my dread ! my horror !*

For

*Far rather had I flourish'd in a plant,
 And only reach'd a vegetable life,
 Open'd my blossoms to the rising sun,
 And dropp'd their beauties ere the evening close;
 Or had I mounted with the feather'd race
 In heights of air; or with my fellow brutes
 At freedom rang'd the trackless desert o'er;
 Slept in a den, or stretch'd my careless bulk
 Secure in open fields, heedless of good
 Or evil past, or present, or to come!*

*Oh, envy'd lot to mine! if I must live
 Eternal years excluded from thy face,
 Be it in earth, or air, or in the deep,
 Where thou art absent, ev'ry place is hell!*

The fields and woods are often witness to these soliloquies, while I fly from man, to converse with the great spirit of nature; for you have at last convinced me of a divine presence, with whose immensity I am surrounded. To this conscious Mind I sometimes address myself; with pleasure I grow acquainted with this propitious Being, and adore him as the spring of my existence. I seem to find some new capacities of happiness awake in my soul. I languish for some unknown joys, some yet unexperienced pleasures,

fures, and grow confident, that the Power who raised these desires, will at last gratify them. That silence, that self-reflection and retirement, that was lately my horror, is now become my delight ; while I am attending the dictates of reason, and sincerely endeavouring to know the will of that divine Mind, who must be too beneficent to leave me in my present doubts, while I am sincerely seeking the heavenly illumination.

Thus far, my dear EUSEBIUS, your arguments have had success. I have the highest obligations to you, for not suffering me to degrade myself into the rank of animals, and for persuading me to assume the dignity of a reasonable creature : In that capacity I am

Your most obliged humble Servant,

PHILANDER.





L E T T E R V.

To Mrs. —, from AMORET, giving an account of her criminal-passion for SEBASTIAN.

M A D A M,

HOW shall I begin? What language can paint the confusion of my thoughts? which could you be sensible of, it would be some apology for the fatal secret I would discover. I am yet but a modest sinner, and can neither excuse, nor dare disguise my guilt from one, who till now has shared all the secrets of my soul.

Oh, think what I would say! imagine what it is I find such reluctance to discover, and which I must discover, tho' it costs me all your esteem! your esteem, which has been my pride and happiness: but even that I will resign, rather than suffer you to injure your own character, by a continuance of that friendship I have forfeited.

G 5

I am

I am not that modest innocent person you believe me : There is no disguising my infamy, nor recovering my lost honour.

I know you are surprized ; you hardly credit me ; you would fain believe I have bely'd myself ; and what I have told you, is the effect of spleen, melancholy, any thing but truth. Would to heaven that it was all frenzy, and wild imagination ! that I were innocently unhappy ! that I had lost my reason, and kept my virtue !

*Oh, heav'nly virtue ! thine's a sacred flame,
And still my soul pays homage to thy name.*

Ye chaste and holy thoughts, that once possessed my soul, return again ! return, ye smiling scenes of innocence and peace ! Ye secret consolations of religion ! ye gentle whispers of conscience ! speak peace again to my unquiet breast !

I have not yet begun my fatal story :—
Oh, let it never be told ! let it be lost in eternal oblivion !—but that's impossible, 'tis registered on my heart.

*In what dark cavern shall I hide my head ?
Where seek retreat, now innocence is fled ?*

If my penitence had obtained pardon from heaven, the public would speak my infamy aloud. How am I fallen ! from what height of reputation to the lowest contempt ! This, to a mind that still retains the nicest sense of honour, is an affliction insupportable. I have no refuge from the insults of the world, but solitude, and thither the thoughts of my guilt and infamy pursue me ; the country shades, the seats of tranquillity and peace, afford me no relief.

*Alone thro' unfrequented shades I rove,
And hope the sweets of solitude to prove :
But at my sight each verdant prospect wears
A gloomy view, and every plant appears
To bend its top, o'ercharg'd with dewy tears. }
What joy can I in these recesses find ?
What beauteous scenes can please a guilty
mind ?*

*In vain the sun his morning pride displays ;
I turn my eyes, and sicken at his rays :
The silver moon, and sparkling stars by night,
Torment me too with their officious light.*

Heaven and earth seem to reproach me, and
join with the convictions of my own reason,
which

which fully approves the rules I have violated. To what has my folly reduced me? Where shall I seek for peace, when I am at variance with myself, and my prudence is inconsistent with those heavenly precepts, to which my mind assents?

I would tell you the story of my ruin, but every circumstance fills me with confusion. You know my seducer, and what a train of artifices he has employed to complete it: You, Madam, gave me many gentle admonitions; but I was too secure in my own resolution, and that disguise of honour, which the false *Sebastian* always avowed, and never with more assurance, than when his flattery betrayed me into his infamy.

Time and place, the evening gloom, and verdant shade, every circumstance conspired to my undoing. The whispering gales, the falling fountains, the green retreats, and flowery scenes, heightened the soft temptation: All nature seemed to sooth the tender passion, and gave my charming seducer new advantages; his form, his aspect acquired unusual graces, and his language was all enchantment.

— And,

— *And, oh! his charming tongue*
Was but too well acquainted with my weak-
ness;
He talk'd of love, and all my melting heart
Dissolv'd within my breast——

OTWAY.

Whither is my imagination wandering?
 Ye powers of chastity, assist me! blot this
 guilty scene for ever from my soul! let the
 remembrance of these criminal delights no
 more return! let them be lost in darkness
 and oblivion! let me be entertained with
 more pure and lasting joys, in some humble
 retreat, far from the noise and thoughtless
 amusements of the world! I ask not princely
 bowers, or artful walks; let me pass my hours
 in some unfrequented shade, where the images
 of vanity and sin may never enter!

Oh, celestial life! How do these peaceful
 scenes sooth and flatter my soul! through
 what enchanting paths does my imagination
 stray! Ye vain grandeurs of the world, a-
 dieu: Adieu, ye idle amusements, and fan-
 tastick pleasures: What shadows do you
 now appear! How unsubstantial to these se-
 rious

rious prospects of bliss! Let me dwell unmolested here; let me lose the remembrance of this busy world, and hear no more of its distracting follies! Here let me attend the happy period, that shall untie the band of life; and then,

*Let some fair Spirit, form'd alone for love,
That's happy in its full enjoyment,
Tune the celestial lute, and gently sing
A Requiem to my soul, call out my life
By the sweet pow'rs of heav'nly harmony:
While on a rosy couch I rest my head,
And in the languishments of love divine
Resign my breath, and wake in endless joy.*

In the height of distraction, I subscribe,

M A D A M,

Yours, &c.



L E T T E R VI.

From EVANDER to a Libertine.

YOU must excuse me, my Lord, if I should not yield to the conviction of your rallery, nor damn myself in mere good manners and ceremony. I must confess, never was a bad cause defended with more wit and vivacity: but I dare not venture on eternal misery, in the gaiety of my heart, nor give up my hopes of salvation for a jest.

Nor can you blame me, my Lord, for being serious in things, which, to my apprehension, are the greatest realities; tho', to your politer imagination, they may appear but dreams and chimeras. Till I can change my opinion, I should act unreasonably, to desist from my pursuit of what I think the noblest end of human actions.

As for your objection against my scheme, that it is a happiness future and uncertain: yours, my Lord, has the same disadvantage.

Is

Is there any mortal that thinks himself happy in any present enjoyments? Some uneasy circumstance or other mingles itself with all sublunary bliss; 'tis some future expectation that engages the mind. To-morrow's assignation with a jovial friend or mistress, depends on so precarious a thing as life; which thousands, before another rising sun, must resign, and yours perhaps may be among the destined number; and in that very moment your expectations perish, and prove as visionary as the celestial pleasures and divine entertainments that you turn into ridicule.

On your scheme, it is but a breath betwixt a man, a reasonable being, the Lord of the creation, and a clod of earth, a shadow, a mere nothing. If the machine should keep a proper situation to drink, to sing, to laugh, and dance; and thousand other chances may start up to disappoint the promised joy; which if you reach, fruition itself will deceive your hopes, and leave you nothing but anxiety and remorse.

This is what can never happen to me, though all my bright expectations should prove a fiction; as soon as I reach the fatal period,

period, I shall be past reflection; my gaudy hopes and being will end at once, and leave me for ever insensible of my loss: in the mean time, as long as the dream of life lasts, the very prospect of boundless and immortal pleasures must give the mind a greater satisfaction in mere speculation, than all those fleeting imperfect enjoyments, whose fallacy you every moment discover.

Let my plan of happiness be ever so visionary, it is noble; let it be invented by the craft of priests or politicians, it is superior to all the luxury, by which the greatest libertine ever proposed to gratify his desires.

Riches and grandeur, wine and mirth, musick and beauty, are the height of your wishes; but all these either fatigue the mind with anxiety, or languish and sleep on the senses. You have often owned to me, that a series of these enjoyments has left you nothing but vanity and vexation; and have in your reasonable intervals confessed, that these are no more than spacious names, and shadows of some *original good*, that the mind through every disguise pursues.

This

This is the supreme excellency after which my soul aspires ; if it is imaginary, the mind must yet be enlarged, by grasping at the enjoyment of infinite happiness : for I dare confess, my end is the same with yours ; it is pleasure we both pursue ; and as at present it consists chiefly in expectation, mine must surpass yours by the proportion of its object.

You have set your night for the Opera, to hear *Faustina* sing ; I expect the period, when the curtain of mortality shall be drawn, and the scenes of eternal glories open, and Angels solace me with celestial harmony.

The flowery spring returns to love, and your soft retirement into one of the fairest seats in *England* entertains you ; while my imagination wanders through the heavenly Paradise, and recreates itself by blissful streams among the trees of life.

You attend the happy period, that, after long impatience, shall give the charming *Zephalinda* to your vows ; while a diviner flame animates my soul, in the search of infinite perfection.

But

*But tell me whence this wond'rous flame began,
Ye angels, who behold the face of God!*

*I call the worms my brethren, and confess,
Corruption is my father; yet high as yours
My wishes rise; the same divine ambition,
The same bright object, kindles my desires.*

*O lovelier than the fairest of thy works,
Nothing below thyself, great as thou art,
Exalted and supreme—nothing below
Thyself can ever fix my restless thought.
These faculties were made alone for thee,
Or I had never rais'd a wish so high.*

*Necessity of nature leads me on;
My reason has no theme, my life no end:
Love the superior passion of my soul,
Finds nothing equal to its dignity.
Give all the sun goes round, to those that seek
A happiness beneath the Sov'reign Good:
One gentle look, one heav'nly smile of thine,
Has blotted ev'ry charm from nature's face,
And faded all the glory of the world.*

*Why dost thou bid me listen to the voice
Of nature, in her just melodious round?
Why dost thou bid me trace the flow'ry fields,
The spring's gay verdure, or with wond'ring eyes
Survey the circle of the firmament?*

What

*What is there lovely on the spacious earth,
Or in the ætherial round, compar'd to thee?
Compar'd to thee, the stars can boast no light;
The sun itself, in modest clouds conceal'd,
Pays homage to the great eternal spring
Of sacred life, and uncreated light.*

*Whate'er at utmost stretch the mind of man
Can form, in its unbounded rage of thought,
Of bright, or fair, or justly regular,
When fancy launches out to worlds unknown,
And paints beyond created beauty fair,
Still thou art fairer, and more perfect still.*

I know, my Lord, you will pardon this poetical excursion, since I have been led to it by your example.

I need not make an apology for continuing to insult you with my privileges, since I have no design in it but what is abstractly disinterested and charitable. A place of trust or honour employs your thoughts, and calls for your perpetual attendance; and when you think yourself secure of the gaudy trifle, your pretensions may be lost by a momentary caprice: But my expectations run higher than any dignity this world can boast; it is a celestial crown and kingdom that fires my ambition;

ambition; I am in pursuit of infinite honours, and grasp the glories of immortality.

You see, my Lord, in every respect, in love and glory, I have the advantage of you; Suppose my pretensions as visionary as you will, nothing can be more exalted, than such a notion of happiness: it is endless and complete, unclouded with pain or sorrow; whereas you can never boast of being perfectly at ease, nor to taste pleasure unmingled with many mortifying evils; in your gayest flights, you cannot flatter yourself with such views.

But this prospect is all peaceful and serene, not a moment's anxiety shall rise, to break the series of eternal joy. Whatever holy cheat laid the plan, 'tis no dishonour to be thus deluded. Let poets, priests, or politicians be the inventors, a thousand times blest be the happy genius, that provided this relief to soften the chagrin of mortal life; when tired and sick of all mortal vanities, the mind reposes itself in fragrant bowers, sports on flowery lawns, and wanders thro' *Elysian* groves; when the raptured fancy drinks at the fountains of life, and bathes in rivers of immortal pleasure!

Death,

Death, the gloomy period of all your hopes, in the height of your luxury, and most jovial entertainments, insults your imagination with this horrid aspect: but this ghastly phantom, this universal terror, brightens into a smile, and in an angel's form beckons me away to endless rest. That untried gulph, that you expect will at once swallow up your joys and existence, appears to me a passage to undecaying life and pleasure.

And let it still be granted, that my expectation of future bliss proves a fiction, and Christianity a mere delusion; I shall be insensible of remorse or shame for my credulity, and shall lie down as gloriously with the clods of the valley, and sleep as sweetly in my primitive dust as your Lordship.

But oh! should the objects of the Christian Faith prove true, what a wild hazard do you run! what limits will your confusion find! your shame will be as lasting as your misery: You will reproach yourself for ever, and be exposed to the derision of the wretched society to which you are joined——*Il n'y a rien plus reel que cela, ni de plus terrible, faisons tant que nous voudrons les braves:* “ There's nothing
“ more

“ more real than that, nothing more terrible,
“ let us put on never so many stout airs.”

I have, you find, obeyed your commands,
and sent you my thoughts on this subject; to
convince your lordship how much I am

Your devoted humble Servant,

EVANDER.





LETTER VII.

*From HERMINIUS to his Sister, acquainting
her with the unhappy effects of his passion for
CLEORA.*

My dear Sister,

IT is with great pleasure I obey your command, in letting you know the disposition of my heart to the charming *Cleora*. To one whose thoughts were less refined than yours, my discourse would be incredible; but you are a sort of Platonick, and may perhaps approve the effects of a generous passion, and give credit to the reformation it has made in my life.

You will forgive me, Madam, for being once in the right, when I have dissented from you, since it is the only instance I have to boast of: Had I been governed by your advice, and fled the fair *Cleora*, instead of

con-

conversing with her, I might have been an unreformed libertine: But she set virtue in my view with its most charming advantages; I saw an angel in her form, and heard celestial musick in her voice: she was the messenger of the skies to convert me; I owned the credentials, and yielded to the heavenly inspiration.

You know, my dear Sister, that her dawning beauty had made an impression on my heart before I went to travel.

*I watch'd the early glories of her eyes,
As men for day-break watch the eastern skies.*

DRYDEN.

I left *England* with the flattering hopes of finding her free at my return, and with a full intention to make my addresses to her. While I staid at *Rome*, that imperial seat of vice, the only loose amour I had, was with a beautiful *Italian*, who something resembled the matchless *Cleora*, who was still the mistress of my reasonable affections.

But how great was the anguish of my soul, when, after all my gay expectations, the first news that surprized me at my return

was, that she was just married to *Philaret*, the man that of all the world I would not have hated or injured; a man that had every amiable quality, and was the pride and joy of all his acquaintance; nor could I forget some former obligations his popular interest had laid on me. In this exigence I resolved to dispense with the ceremony of paying my compliments to him, that I might avoid the sight of his lovely bride; nor did I frequent any public place where I was likely to meet her.

But at last the fatal interview came, and in the drawing-room, sparkling as an angel, I saw the lovely creature. From this moment I became an apostate to virtue, and secretly renouncing all the ties of truth and honour, resolved with great deliberation to be a villain. This noble design was the subject of my retired contemplations. With what wild, what impious soliloquies, have I whisper'd to the groves and streams, wishing the laws of heaven cancelled, and the state of nature, in the fiction of a Golden Age, real! These senseless lines have often expressed my infamous raptures:

O sicut

*O siecle plus heureux mille fois pour les hommes,
 Que le siecle dur ou nous sommes !
 Non parceque la terre en cet age parfait
 Donnoit tous les fruits sans culture,
 Que les fleuves estoient de lait,
 Que le miel dans nos bois couloit sur la verdure :
 Mais parceque l'honneur, ce tyran des nos ames,
 Cette trompeuse idole, & ce phantome vain,
 N'avoit sur les cœurs une pouvoir souverain,
 Et ne s'opposoit pas aux amoreuses flammes *.*

Such were my secret extravagancies, the entertainments of my solitary walks; but in the height of my folly Heaven did not intirely abandon me.

* O happy age ! a thousand times more blest'd,
 Than the hard state by mortals now possess'd !
 Not because bounteous nature did then yield
 Her fruits spontaneous to the soil untill'd ;
 Nor that the rivers flow'd with milky waves,
 Nor that the trees drop'd honey from their leaves ;
 But because Honour, phantom of controul,
 False airy idol, tyrant of the soul,
 Then to our am'rous flames no bounds consign'd,
 Then knew no sov'reign power o'er the mind.

I took all handsome opportunities to follow and converse with the fair *Cleora*, a favour she never refused me; if she had, I should have entertained more hopes, than from the manner in which she treated me: I attended her coach, her chair, haunted her at publick places, ogled, stared, sighed, and practised all the modern fopperies of love, which she never thought it worth her while to observe; and, to my great mortification, I found I neither pleased, nor molested her: All my dumb eloquence and mute address was lost on her; she minded it no more, nor perhaps so much, as she would the frolicks of a monkey: I might give myself what postures and airs I thought most becoming, and act the indolent, or languishing lover, without interruption; she looked as if she had no manner of apprehension what I was doing, or what I intended. My breath had been as well employed, in talking of darts and flames, to the plants and trees; the jargon was so perfectly unintelligible to her, that she either answered nothing to the purpose, or turned the discourse to some grave moral subject.

And as she had the finest turn of wit, and the most graceful manner of speaking in the world,

world, every thing she said made an impression on my soul; every vice on which she set a mark of infamy, though ever so modish, lost its credit with me; and every virtue, tho' ever so severe, seemed practicable with her applause.

The manner in which she treated my passion, set me in a very ridiculous light to myself. The vanity appeared unpardonable, that inspired me with the hopes of rivalling the happy man, to whom, in the sight of heaven, with her vows she had sincerely given her esteem and tenderest affection. Whatever regard was due to such distinguishing merit as *Philaret's*, she gave him: Nothing could be more soft and engaging than her whole behaviour to him. Her modesty was unaffected, truth and justice appeared in all her actions: In the gayest bloom of youth, and triumph of beauty, she practised the strictest rules of piety. This, joined to the most gentle disposition, and a genius turned to every thing that is beautiful and polite, makes her one of the brightest characters of the age.

A thousand times blest be the heavenly Power that kept me back from the ruin I

courted, and by the example and conversation of the lovely woman, made me a profelyte to virtue, and guided me to a rational and lasting happiness!

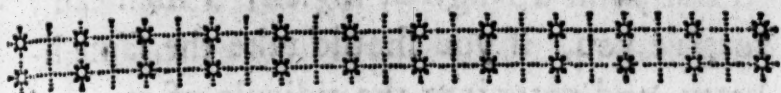
But, my dear sister, this unfortunate event shall not encourage me to contemn your advice on any future occasion; and in this instance I know you will forgive,

MADAM!

Your most obedient humble Servant,

HERMINIUS.





L E T T E R VIII.

*From BELLAMOUR to CARLOS, relating the
story of his love to ALMEDA.*

I Am glad to find you so entirely satisfied, so completely blessed amidst the noise and amusements of the town: I congratulate your enjoyment of assemblies, operas, and masquerades. But all your boasted pleasures cannot raise my envy at present, nor tempt me back from the country.

My mind is in such a fantastick disposition, that I find more satisfaction in talking to trees, streams and echoes, than to reasonable creatures. I converse frequently with a row of willows, that grow on the banks of a neighbouring river, and have often called them to witness, what they neither hear nor understand. The streams are often swelled with my tears, without ever rising to a deluge; and the rocks melted at my complaints, without losing one atom of their bulk.

H 4

But

But while I laugh at myself, I shall easily forgive you, if you should take the same liberty, and enter into the ridicule of my character: You are a lover yourself of the modern jovial kind, quite the reverse of the solemn antiquated form of *Pastor Fido*, *Don Quixote*, and your humble servant.

All this raillery is forced, and only used in policy, that I may tell my story with a good grace to a man of your gaiety.

You know how the young *Elvira* was left to my father's care by her mother, and by a contract between both our parents, was from her childhood design'd a wife for me; but neither her beauty nor vast fortune have had the least influence on me to make any addresses to her. I have conversed with her with great indifference, and thought I had reason to believe she had the same for me. But my father, in order to make good his engagements, when he was on his death-bed, desired me to promise him with the greatest solemnity to marry her; as he had been the best of parents, I promis'd him without any reluctance, on condition *Elvira* did not refuse me, of which I had some secret hopes: However, as I then had no other inclination,

I was

I was in no manner of care whether she accepted, or refused me.

But when I was last in town, and walking in the Mall, I met one of the most agreeable women I ever saw; she was tall, and exactly shaped, her eyes large and fine, with something soft and pensive in her air, something of thought, of wit, of significancy, which I cannot express. Whether I then met my fellow-mind, that had been paired for me by destiny; or whether in some pre-existent state we had been acquainted, I know not, but I flattered myself she observed me with contempt. I spent my time in following or endeavouring to meet her, and at last had made myself so remarkable, that she seem'd to think herself obliged to avoid me. As far as I could, without being ridiculous by my curiosity, I enquired after her, but left the walks, uninformed who she was. I was in a day or two forced to go into the country, where I was detained for some months, endeavouring in vain to forget the fair stranger I had seen.

In this temper I was taking a solitary ramble from my own seat, till I came to the entrance of a wood that was near the Earl of——'s park: here I found, surprizing as

a heavenly vision, the lovely form that had charmed me, sitting with a *Milton* in her hand, which she was reading with such attention, that I spoke to her before she saw me. She immediately withdrew into the park, but I followed her, and told her, the happiness of my life depended on her attention, which in the most modest manner she at last granted, and heard the soft relation. That little success gave me such hopes, that I pursued the affair on every opportunity I could prevail with her to give me: For as my fortune and rank were superior to hers, which was only dependent, she acted with great caution, and convinced me that she possessed all that true grandeur of mind, that conscious virtue inspires. Her wit, the elegance of her behaviour, with a thousand graces that attended her whole conduct, secured her conquest, and confined all my hopes of earthly happiness to the possession of the charming Maid: Nor did I fear the least obstacle to my wishes, for I had told her my engagement to my father, and the full certainty I had, (as indeed I thought) of *Elvira's* refusal; which I now went to ask, with a perfect assurance that I should receive it.

Her

Her coldness did not seem to have the air of affectation, but rather the effect of a secret aversion. I looked on myself to be a sort of incumbrance entailed on her by her ancestors, of which she would be joyfully freed; and in the gaiety of my heart made her an offer of my person, such as it was, without the least expectation of being accepted; as I was, to my unspeakable confusion: She perceived my disappointment with a modest, but tender concern, and put me into a disorder that I could not easily recover.

I knew my love to the beautiful *Almeda* was a secret to every body but ourselves, and if it had been known, I would do *Elvira* the justice to confess, there was a sweetness in her temper almost incapable of malice: However, I durst not discover the affair without *Almeda's* consent; to whom I went in the height of my distress, to let her know the disappointment: She grew pale at the relation, sunk into my arms, and only spoke with tears; but soon left me, without letting me know her resolution, till within a few hours I received the inclosed.

TO BELLAMOUR,

I Beg you to forget, and never think of seeing me again, nor let any thing tempt you to violate your engagement to a dying father. It would be barbarous in you to abandon the fair Elyira, who was an orphan cast on the protection of your family. Do not entertain one anxious thought for me: I was the care of providence when I was unknown to you, and that will be my refuge in all future distress.——Adieu for ever.

ALMEDA.

I am just going to discover our mutual passion to *Elvira*, and to shew her this letter, in hopes that compassion will prevail with her to refuse me; and cannot but flatter myself with success, from the gentleness of her disposition. I am, in all the changes of fortune,

My dear Carlos,

Sincerely yours,

BELLAMOUR.

See the sequel of this story in LETTER XVII. PART II.



L E T T E R IX.

*To PHILARIO, from the Duke of———,
Written on his Death-bed.*

BEFORE you receive this, my final state will be determined by the Judge of all the earth; in a few days at most, perhaps in a few hours, the inevitable sentence will be past, that shall raise me to the heights of happiness, or sink me to the depths of misery. While you read these lines, I shall be either groaning under the agonies of absolute despair, or triumphing in the fulness of joy.

It is impossible for me to express the present disposition of my soul, the vast uncertainty I am struggling with; no words can paint the force and vivacity of my apprehensions: Every doubt wears the face of horror, and would perfectly overwhelm me, but for some faint beams of hope, which dart across the tremendous gloom. What tongue can utter the anguish of a soul suspended between

tween the extremes of infinite joy, or eternal misery? I am throwing my last stake for eternity, and tremble and shudder for the important event.

Good God! how have I employed myself! what enchantment has held me! in what delirium has my life been past! what have I been doing! while the sun in its race, and the stars in their courses, have lent their beams, perhaps only to light me to perdition.

I never waked till now. I have but just commenced the dignity of a Rational Being: Till this instant I had a wrong apprehension of every thing in nature; I have pursued shadows, entertained myself with dreams; I have been treasuring up dust, and sporting myself with the wind. I look back on my past life, and but for some memorials of infamy and guilt, it is all a blank, a perfect vacancy. I might have grazed with the beasts of the field, or sung with the winged inhabitants in the woods, to much better purpose, than any for which I have lived: And oh! but for some faint hope, a thousand times more blessed had I been to have slept with the clods of the valley, and never heard

heard the Almighty *Fiat*, nor waked into life at his command !

I never had a just apprehension of the solemnity of the part I am to act till now. I have often met death insulting on the hostile plain, and with a stupid boast defied his terrors; with a courage as brutal as that of the warlike horse, I have rushed into the battle, laughed at the glittering spear, and rejoiced at the sound of the trumpet; nor had a thought of any state beyond the grave, nor the great tribunal, to which I must have been summoned;

*Where all my secret guilt had been reveal'd,
Nor the minutest circumstance conceal'd.*

It is this which arms death with all its terrors; else I could still mock at fear, and smile in the face of the gloomy monarch. It is not giving up my breath, it is not being for ever insensible, as the thought at which I shrink; it is the terrible *hereafter*, the something beyond the grave, at which I recoil. Those great realities, which, in the hours of mirth and vanity, I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of superstitious brains; these start forth, and dare me now in their
most

most terrible demonstration. My awakened conscience feels something of that eternal vengeance I have often defied.

To what heights of madness is it possible for human nature to reach? What extravagance is it to jest with death! to laugh at damnation! to sport with eternal chains, and recreate a jovial fancy with the scenes of infernal misery!

Were there no impiety in this kind of mirth, it would be as ill bred as to entertain a dying friend with the sight of an *Harlequin*, or the rehearsal of a farce. Every thing in nature seems to reproach this levity in human creatures: The whole creation but man is serious; man, who has the highest reason to be so, while he has affairs of infinite consequence depending on his short uncertain duration. A condemned wretch may with as good a grace go dancing to his execution, as the greatest part of mankind go on with such a thoughtless gaiety to their graves.

Oh, my *Philarie*! with what horror do I recal those hours of vanity we have wasted together! Return, ye lost neglected moments! how should I prize you above the eastern treasures! Let me dwell with hermits; let me rest
on.

on the cold earth ; let me converse in cottages ; may I but once more stand a candidate for an immortal crown, and have my probation for celestial happiness.

Ye vain grandeurs of a court ! ye sounding titles, and perishing riches ! what do ye now signify ? what consolation, what relief can ye give me ?

I have had a splendid passage to the grave ; I die in state, and languish under a gilded canopy ; I am expiring on soft and downy pillows, and am respectfully attended by my servants and physicians : My dependents sigh, my sisters weep, my father bends beneath a load of years and grief ; my lovely wife, pale and silent, conceals her inward anguish ; my friend, the generous *Pylades*, who was as my own soul, suppresses his sighs, and leaves me to hide his secret grief.

But oh ! which of these will answer my summons at the high tribunal ? which of them will bail me from the arrest of death ? who will descend into the dark prison of the grave for me ?

Here they all leave me, after having paid a few idle ceremonies to the breathless clay ; which perhaps may lie reposed in state, while
my

my soul, my only conscious part, may stand trembling before my Judge. My afflicted friends, it is very probable, with great solemnity, will lay the senseless corpse in a stately monument, inscribed with,

Here lies the Great———

But could the pale carcase speak, it would soon reply;

———False marble, where?

Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here.

COWLEY.

While some flattering panegyrick is pronounced at my interment, I may perhaps be hearing my just condemnation at a superior tribunal; where an unerring verdict may sentence me to everlasting infamy. But I cast myself on his absolute mercy, through the infinite merits of the Redeemer of lost mankind. Adieu, my dear *Philario*, till we meet in the world of spirits.





L E T T E R X.

From CELADON to AMASIA, who had seduced him into a criminal love for her.

TOO lovely *Amasia*! whither have you led my heedless steps? into what paths of destruction have you seduced me? I have done an action which will never bear the reflection of reason; an action, that will stamp an endless stain on my character, and with which my conscience loudly reproaches me.

I have sinned against all the ties of honour and gratitude. The generous man I have wrong'd, was the guardian of my childhood, and the guide of my yet unexperienced youth: I am entering into the world under his conduct and protection, he has been more than a father to me; never was a trust discharged with greater tenderness and fidelity. May heaven return it in a thousand blessings on his head!—Should he ever leave an orphan like me exposed, may it meet the same justice

justice and humanity I have found from him; but, oh! may it never make such a return! Let such villainy never stain his noble race, nor leave a blemish on his name!

These thoughts bring back to my memory all his gentle treatment; awake my young affections, and melt into childish tears:—Oh, could they wash away my guilt, and restore me back to virtue!

—————*Yet I'll look up.*

*My fault is past: But, oh! what form of prayer
Can serve my turn!*

SHAKESPEAR.

Curse on the maxims of the world, and that impropriety of language, that would disguise the basest of crimes, with the names of amusement and gallantry? Let me be singular, let me be unpolite, let me be unfashionably good, if I can but keep my peace, and justify myself to my own conscience! Let me inviolably observe the rules of truth and justice, be fearless and open to the inspection of God: and may everlasting reproach rest on all the modish appellations and refinements, that would soften the horror of a base and treacherous action!

These

These were the principles in which the injured *Altamont* instructed me, and confirmed by his own great example. My mind had been elevated by the rehearsal of heroick actions, and a love to the public interest, by a philosophick fortitude, and the command of my passions. Such were the motives that governed me, till the fatal day came that made you a bride to the deluded *Altamont*; from which unhappy period I may date my apostacy from virtue. You taught me softer maxims, and perverted the noble ardour of my soul into loose and infamous designs; while you caressed me with an open freedom, which my early years, and your husband's affection for me, too easily excused.

Till then I had been a stranger to love; and thoughtless of danger, left myself unguarded to all your charms; ignorant whither the growing passion led, nor thought the pleasure criminal, which I took in your conversation: But I was soon soften'd into sin, and unwarily took in the deadly poison, while you indulged the guilty inclination, and soothed me into ruin.

What infernal delusion perverted your judgment, when you preferred me to the
 3 and man,

man, to whom you had given your vows? The vainest of all your sex might have limited her ambition with such a conquest. If the most agreeable person, the best temper, joined with unblemished equity to man, and piety to God, ever claimed esteem, he might justly challenge it from all that knew him.

But he had a right to your affection by a thousand tender engagements, and by his entire confidence in your fidelity; not from any credulity of temper, but from his own innate honour, and a soul incapable of treachery or distrust. With an artifice which only hell could teach, you have secured the esteem of a man, who in all things else acts with the greatest judgment and penetration.

It was the disguise I saw you practise, that recalled me back to truth and honour: in your crime I perceived my own guilt, and abhorred the monstrous part I had been acting. While he, my guardian, my protector, had been fatiguing himself with cares and journeys, to secure me from wrongs and injustice; I in his own house proved a traitor to his honour, and invaded the most sacred rights of his affection.—Oh, that he would appear to my view an enemy, a villain, any thing
but

but a friend and benefactor! These titles confound and pierce my soul with the most exquisite torments.

The fever from which I am just recovered, was not half so threatening to my life, as the expressions of his kindness; when with the tenderness of a father, and the benignity of a friend, he watched my languishing intervals, and discovered the most affectionate concern for my life. How exquisite was my remorse! Nothing but the dread of eternal vengeance could have kept me from putting an end to that life, for which he shewed such an unfeign'd concern.

My crime stood in all its aggravations before me: The secret sense of my guilt, was worse than death or infamy; I abhorred the disguise of virtue, by which I deceived him: No consideration, but his happiness, could have restrained me from confessing my villainy, and giving myself up to his just reproaches and vengeance. I could have smiled on death, and welcomed the fatal stroke from his hand, could that have been an expiation for my guilt.

But I had my peace to make with Heaven, and found another sort of expiation necessary

to secure me from divine vengeance ; so that as much as I was tired with life, death was no refuge, nor could I fly to the grave as a sanctuary : Yet, as soon as ever my health permits, I am fully determined to make myself an exile from my native country, and fly the sight of my injured friend for ever. But,

—— *Where shall I find refuge ?*

*No barb'rous nation will receive a guilt
So much transcending theirs, but drive me out !
The wildest beasts will hunt me from their dens,
And birds of prey molest me in the grave.*

I dare not see you, Madam, to take a last farewell : You have beauty, and I am human ; and after these convictions, should the dangerous flame again kindle, I must sin away all hopes of forgiveness from God or man. Make what reparation you can to the best of husbands by your future conduct : 'Tis the last advice you will receive from

The unhappy CELADON.



L E T T E R X I.

To my Lord——, from a Statesman.

My LORD,

YOUR Commands are very obliging, in giving me an opportunity to be impertinent, by entering into a detail of my solitary amusements, in this absolute retreat from all the polite and agreeable part of society. It is well I have your gracious indulgence to talk of myself, and be the Hero of my own romance; for, without vanity, I meet nothing here more considerable; nor is it without justice that I claim the privilege of personating the superior part in the Drama.

Indeed I was never more sensible of my own dignity; abstract from business or diversion, my mind retires within itself, where it finds treasures till now undiscovered, capacities formed for infinite objects, desires

VOL. I.

I

that

that stretch themselves beyond the limits of this wide creation in search of the great Original of life and pleasure: I find new powers exerting their energy, some latent exercises, which till now, I have been a stranger to: I have indeed heard from the men, who teach such holy Fables, (as I then thought them) that the soul was immortal, and capable of celestial joys: But I rather wished, than believed, these transporting truths, and put them on a level with the poets rosy bowers, their myrtle shades, and soft *Elysian* fields; but now I am convinced of their evidence, and triumph in the privileges of my own being. I rejoice to think that the moment I begun to exist, I entered on an eternal state, and commenced a duration, that shall run parallel to that of the supreme and self-existent Mind.

This prospect animates me with a divine ambition, and casts a reproach on all created glory: The world vanishes, its charms and soft allurements are no more; a veil is cast on mortal beauty, the spell is broken, the enchantment dissolved.

You smile, I know, and take this for an imaginary triumph, a sort of cowardly insult,
in

in the absence of an enemy. You will tell me this contempt of grandeur appears with an ill grace, in one that has the possession of a splendid post in the Government: But this, my Lord, is what has given me a just opinion of the world, and of myself: A constant series of success and prosperity has convinced me, that the whole creation cannot make me blest: My ambitious designs have never been disappointed; in love, by a strange caprice of the sex, I have been always fortunate; but whatever pleasure I pursued, the enjoyment always undeceived, or disgusted me: Sometimes I was too wise, and sometimes too capricious to be pleased.

Why am I not at rest? Why cannot these objects satisfy, or at least delude me with a dream of happiness? Why must I so exactly balance the weight of evil, that mingles with every good? Had I these reflecting powers to make me thus nicely miserable? I am reasoning away all the satisfaction of human life, and growing wise to desperation: I cannot so much as amuse myself with an airy hope; I have tried all the vanities below the sun, and there is no novelty left to flatter me; I know the utmost that beauty

and greatness can give, and am cured of love and ambition by experimental evidence.

What a paradise, what lasting joys, did I promise myself in the possession of the admired *Aspasia*? The yielding beauty, by granting my desires, lost my esteem; her charms vanished, her wit was impertinence, and her artifice disgusted me. This put a period to my gallantries: The women were no longer angels, but mere erring mortals, with whom I conversed on a level, without any temptation to idolatry: Balls and assemblies, dancing and dress, were no longer the subjects of my serious application, nor the supreme design of my being: I no longer interested myself in the success of any modish entertainment; with great moderation I heard the grand controversy who sung best, *Cuzzoni* or *Faustina*; and I left the important truth to be decided by more capable judges: I yielded an implicit assent to every well-drest critick, who affirmed Mrs:——— was the best actress of *Polly* in the *Beggar. Opera*; and never betrayed any intemperate zeal, or breach of charity, against those who dissented: I knew every beau and fine lady in *Great-Britain* had a right to judge for themselves; and

and that being too positive, might endanger the publick peace.

But these soft follies were only discarded for more spacious vanities: Distinction and power, titles and equipage, now employed my thoughts; ambition took full possession of my soul:—I reached the envied height, and made myself gloriously miserable. The period from whence I resolved to date my happiness, begun with distrust and anxiety: Instead of friends I found myself surrounded with flatterers, and mercenary dependents: Impatient, and fatigued with the crowd, I sometimes withdrew to my apartment, and in solitary grandeur tried, what joys the contemplation on my quality and titles could give;—*The most noble!—The right honourable!—Ye potent words!*—I cried, *where is your energy!—Ye mighty sounds, that once fired my soul! where is your accustomed force? Have ye no pleasing magick to still the tempest within?—Ye boasted names of trust and power! why can ye no longer recreate my spirits, nor solace my moments of leisure and retirement? Is there nothing in the glittering coronet, this popular toy, to divert me? While I am surrounded with the pageantries of state, and see*

so many badges of my own dignity, why does not my mind elate itself, and brighten into ecstasy?

One would think it impossible to be splenetic, with these fine Panegyricks and elegant Dedications lying before me: Here I find myself a hero, a wit, a handsome man, a virtuoso; and, to sum up all, an universal blessing to mankind. This darling theme, this catalogue of my own good qualities, one would imagine, should gladden my heart, and give me some vivacity; and yet really, my Lord, as agreeable as the subject of my own merit is, it would hardly have kept me awake, if the vexations of state had not done it.

My late indisposition has given me a just excuse to withdraw from publick affairs: I have found a romantick retreat, surrounded with a charming variety of woods, open lawns, and flowery vales, in their uncultivated beauty: Here I rove unattended and free, with no circumstance of grandeur, but the consciousness of a reasonable and immortal being: I have the joy to find I can stand on my own legs, and move from place to place with a spontaneous motion, without the assistance of a painted machine, the prudence

dence of my coachman, and the vigour of my horses.

I have tried what delights were to be found in madness and folly, and am now in pursuit of what wisdom and philosophy can yield. In the fair creation I trace an Almighty Power, and see the immense Divinity impressed on all his works. Inspired with a charming enthusiasm, I address the great spirit of nature in these soliloquies :

*Ye woods and wilds, receive me to your shade!
These still retreats my contemplation aid :
From mortals flying to your chaste abode,
Let me attend th' instructive voice of God !
He speaks in all, and is in all things found ;
I hear him, I perceive him all around ;
In nature's lovely and unblemish'd face,
With joy his sacred lineaments I trace.*

*O glorious Being ! O supremely fair !
How free, how perfect thy productions are !
Forgive me, while with curious eyes I view
Thy works, and boldly thus thy steps pursue :
The silent valley, and the lonely grove
I haunt ; but oh ! 'tis thee I seek and love :
'Tis not the chant of birds, nor whisp'ring breeze,
But thy soft voice I seek among the trees :*

*Invoking thee, by silver streams I walk,
To thee in solitary shades I talk :
I speak thy dear-lov'd name, nor speak in vain;
Kind echoes long the pleasing sound retain.
Reviving sweets the op'ning flow'rs disclose,
Fragrant the violet, and the budding rose ;
But all their balmy sweets from thee they steal,
And something of thee to my sense reveal.
Fair look the stars, and fair the morning ray,
When first the fields their painted scenes display ;
Glorious the sun in his meridian height !
And yet, compar'd to thee, how faint the light !
Ador'd artificer ! What skill divine !
What wonders in the wide creation shine !
Order and majesty adorn the whole,
Beauty and Life, and thou th' inspiring soul :
Whatever grace or harmony's express'd
On all thy works, the God is there confess'd :
But, oh ! from all thy works how small a part,
To human minds, is known of what thou art !
Fancy gives o'er its flight in search of thee ;
Our thoughts are lost in thy immensity.*

The thoughts are my own, but I am modest enough to confess the cadence and rhyme are borrowed ; and as you are a patron of the Muses, I believed the harmony would please you :

you: But you are certainly overjoyed to find the rapture is finished; and that, after this elevation, I am composed enough to subscribe
[myself,

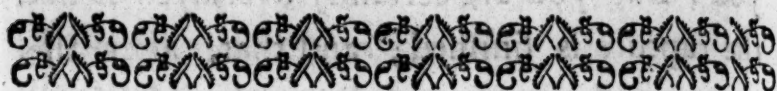
Your Lordship's

Most devoted

Humble Servant,

- PHILANDER.





LETTER XII.

To MYRTILLO, from a Physician, giving him an account of his falling in love with a fair Stranger.

My dear MYRTILLO,

THE Engagement I am under, to attend the Earl of ——— in his illness, will detain me longer in the country than I design'd; nor is this the only motive that has kept me here.

I can conceal nothing of importance, without a breach of that confidence I have in you; nor can I deny myself the pleasure of telling the tender story of my care.

You will be surprized, that the person who conversed in the *Mall*, the *Playhouse*, and *Opera*, with such indifference, should turn lover in the country; but it is a serious truth, and will not admit of raillery: All my earthly happiness

happinefs is in fufpenfe, and depends on the fuccefs of this paffion.

Nor will you cenfure me, when I tell you that my conqueror is the lovely Stranger, that appeared in public laft winter with the Duchefs of ——. I did not fee her then; and if I had, bufinefs or diversion might have guarded me from the foft furprize; but all nature, every alluring circumftance confpired here to vanquifh and enchant me.

The evening was fair, and with Mr. Thomfon's excellent poem on *Summer* in my hand, I took a walk, and read by intervals, till all my foul was compofed and harmonious.

*These are the haunts of meditation, thefe
The fcenes where antient bards th' infpiring breath
Ecftatick felt; and from the world retir'd,
Convers'd with angels, and immortal forms,
On heav'nly errand bent—to fave the fall
Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice,
To hint pure thoughts, and warn the favour'd
foul,
For future trials fated to prepare.*

In this vifionary temper I had wandered about a mile from the earl of ———'s garden's;
and

and park, till I entered a winding valley, green and flowery as the *Elysian* fields; a silver stream ran murmuring along the middle, and willows in equal order adorned the banks: It was not perfect nature, something of art appeared, but in the most agreeable negligence: There were many little mossy seats raised along the sides of the river; but what pleased me most was a grotto, which looked like the retirement of some sylvan deity: I entered and lost myself in a pleasing contemplation, till the sight of the most charming object I ever beheld, surprized me: She seemed

*Fairer than fam'd of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide
By errant Knights ———*

MILTON.

Her shape and features were perfectly regular; her complexion clear as the light.—— But I might as well paint virtue or harmony, as describe the graces of her mien and aspect; in which there was nothing of that gay and thoughtless vivacity, that most of her sex think so becoming; but something so serious and

and composed, something that expressed a mind within conscious of its own dignity and heavenly original. She advanced till she came near the arbour that concealed me, and then seating herself on the bank of the river, in a pensive posture, leaning her cheek on her hand, white as the new-fallen snow, with a soft and graceful accent she repeated the following lines out of *Sir Richard Blackmore's* fine poem on the creation :

*Thy force alone, Religion, death disarms,
Breaks all his darts, and ev'ry viper charms,
Soften'd by thee, the grisly form appears
No more the horrid object of our fears.
We undismay'd this awful pow'r obey,
That guides us thro' the safe, tho' gloomy way,
Which leads to life——*

I heard her with a very tender concern, because there appeared something in her complexion too delicate for a state of confirmed health, which was perhaps what led her to such a serious thought. While she was going on, a spruce footman came to tell her supper was ready, and her father waited for her : She rose immediately, and
followed

followed the man at some distance. When they were gone, my curiosity ventured some paces forward, and at the end of the walk I perceived a pretty romantic pile of building, where she entered. But the evening grew dusky, and I hastened back to the Earl's seat, and retiring to my apartment, passed my time in writing this adventure, of which you shall hear the sequel in my next.

But I am grown a lover in one fatal moment, and in this deplorable circumstance, am

Your devoted humble Servant,

LEANDER.





L E T T E R XIII.

To the same, relating the Death of his Mistress.

MY last informed you in what a serious passion I was engaged; but the tragedy is now finished, and I am past the possibility of being happy in this world.

A few days after my last adventure, there came a message from a neighbouring gentleman, for me to attend one of the family, who was ill; I followed the servant, and found, to my surprize, it was the house where all my hopes were confined. I was immediately conducted to the apartment of my patient, who proved the lovely woman I had seen in my last ramble; she was sitting in a chair, pale and negligent, but perfectly graceful in the height of her disorder.

No words can express my grief, when I found the symptoms of her distemper fatal: Indeed the distraction of my mind was so remarkable, that she could not but observe it; and perceiving her own danger in my concern,

cern, she asked me, without the last emotion, *If I was surprized to find her mortal?* but she desired me, *since it was a truth of which she was entirely convinced, to speak my opinion without the least flattery or caution.*

This true greatness of mind confirmed my esteem, and heightened my concern for her life: but I was in the last exigence what to reply: I durst not flatter her in the common strain of my profession, nor could I imitate that insensibility which the young heroine acted, in an event on which the future happiness of my life depended.

I was ashamed to weep; but while sorrow kept me silent, the dying beauty told me, some intervals of disorder she lately felt, had made the darkness of the grave, and the solemnity of a death-bed, familiar scenes to her imagination. *Waiting for my last hour,* added she, *without consternation, I find this mortal structure sinking into the dust; but methinks I find the nobler powers of my soul kindling into life and immortality.*

What are the laurels and trophies of conquerors, compared to this scene of triumph, which now I could have envied? But my charming patient desired she might try to rest,

rest, and I retired, resolving not to go from the house till I saw the event. She lay as if she slept till the morning, when I was hastily called, and found her past all hopes, but of a few hours life: Her senses were perfect, and a sort of languishing beauty adorned her face, charming beyond all the vivacity of health.

These were some of her last words, uttered with a faint but pleasing accent, the sound of which I shall never forget.

*O Death! how hast thou disguised thy terrors,
and put on an angel's form to approach me!
What welcome, what transporting tidings, hast
thou brought me! I come thou kind messenger
of my liberty and happiness; I obey thy gentle
invitation.*

When shall the curtain fall, and these blest eyes
Meet all the dazzling wonders of the skies?

Oh, rend the hated veil, and take away

The dull partition of this brittle clay!

Come, heav'nly day, which ne'er shall see a
cloud!

Come, chearing smiles, from the bright face
of God.

I see,

I see, methinks, the glimmering of celestial light, and bless the dawning of everlasting day; the shadows are flying, and the heavens opening their inmost glories before me: In a few moments I shall enter the blissful habitations, the dazzling recesses of the Most High, whom I shall behold in full perfection, exalted in majesty, and complete in beauty: My hopes are unbounded, I see no limits to my expectations; for in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.

With these transporting scenes before me, what glorious mortal could excite my envy? What scene of pleasure could the whole creation display to tempt me back? The dark dominions of death, which I am passing through, not a captive, but a conqueror, through the strength of my victorious Redeemer, who has led in triumph all the powers of darkness. Millions of ages of happiness are before me; the prospect stretches to an unmeasurable length; my soul presses forward, and calls eternity itself her own.

At these words, closing her eyes, with a smile she resigned her breath, and left me,

Your most unhappy Friend,

LEANDER.

* * * * *
L E T T E R X I V .
* * * * *

*From MYRTILLA to HERMIONE, giving
an account of the fatal event of her Brother's
Passion for her.*

My dear HERMIONE,

I Hope my last Letter prepared you for the melancholy tidings, which this brings you of my brother's death: I know the relation will heighten your grief and renew my own sorrow; but reason signifies nothing, and proves but an empty name, in the transport of such a tender passion, as now posses all my soul.

After the fatal time that my father had extorted a promise from my brother, and charged him on his blessing never to see you more, I perceived an alteration in the gaiety of his temper, with a visible decay of his health; but I could hardly persuade myself
love

love was the cause, imagining the soft passion in a youth of eighteen, was easily diverted from one fair object to another.

I was confirmed in this, by this obliging and submissive behaviour to my father, whose conduct in this affair was indeed arbitrary and severe; nor could I forbear making some secret reproaches on such a rigorous imposition, where there could be no objection made but to your fortune.

However, filial affection was certainly my brother's governing principle, and he still found some plausible excuses for that severe command, which cut off the brightest hopes he had of any earthly happiness: His piety always silenced my resentments, and pleaded my father's absolute right to dispose of him.

But as much as he endeavoured to disguise his passion for me, the inclosed will convince you of the inward anguish of his mind, which he gave me the day before he died, and charged me not to read it till his eyes were closed in death.

My father in the utmost distress, looked on the expiring youth, but durst not examine into a secret, which would have given him the extremest regret to discover: My brother perceived

perceived his concern, and gave him all the consolation he could, by owning his paternal care of his principles and actions, and returned him the most pathetick acknowledgements, for the restraints his authority had put on some of his youthful follies: My father observed the kind intention of this discourse, which still added to the anguish of his soul

Be satisfied, my dear father, said the dying youth, be satisfied with the determinations of Heaven: I might have dragged out a long inglorious life, loaded with infamy and guilt.

Then, taking me by the hand, with a heavenly smile on his face, he said, *Adieu, my dear sister; I am rather falling into a gentle sleep than dying: I feel no pain, and all within is peaceful and calm.* And then closing his eyes, with a soft voice he repeated these words, and with them resign'd his breath:

*The angels call, they call me from above,
And bid me hasten to the realms of love:*

My

*My soul with transport bears the happy doom;
 I come, ye gentle messengers, I come!
 Earth flies with all the charms it has in store,
 Its snares and gay temptations are no more.
 While heav'n appears, and the propitious skies
 Unveil their inmost glories to my eyes,
 To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu,
 And ask no more the rising sun to view;
 For oh! the light himself, with rays divine,
 Breaks in, and God's eternal day is mine.*

After this moving story, whether I ought in prudence to let you see the inclosed, I cannot determine; but it is not in my power to keep it a secret from my most faithful friend. It will shew my brother's height of virtue, in commanding a passion so tender and fatal.

I am unalterably yours,

MYRTILLA.

This is the Letter he gave me sealed the day before he died, with a charge not to open it till after he was dead:

TO MYRTILLA.

“ My dear Sister,

“ **W**HATEVER care I have taken hitherto to conceal my folly, I now
 “ confess it, that the fatal effect may warn
 “ you from giving up yourself to the govern-
 “ ment of an immoderate passion. It was this
 “ that hastened my early destiny, and cut off
 “ all the noble ends of my life.

“ My love to the beautiful *Hermione* was
 “ such an enchantment, that all the motives
 “ of reason and religion could not free me
 “ from it: The improvements of art and
 “ nature, the love of my country, and the
 “ public welfare, had no share in my
 “ thoughts: my piety was enervated, and
 “ the important end of my being neglected:
 “ I lived, and moved, and acted with no
 “ other design, but to please the caprice of
 “ my fair tyrant:

“ Till my father, with the highest rea-
 “ son, endeavoured to rescue me from the
 “ inglorious slavery. I was convinced of
 “ the kindness of his intention, and how
 “ much

“ much he consulted my honour and advantage, in putting me under a solemn obligation, never to see the object of my dotage more.

“ With the utmost violence to my tender inclination I kept my promise, and fell a victim to the ties of filial piety and truth. What regard I paid to those sacred names, Heaven was my witness, and how sincerely I strove to conquer the unhappy passion that possessed me. Aided by a Power Divine, I at last recovered my reason, but my health hourly declined, and death is now advancing to release me from all the remainders of error and folly: The soft affections of my soul will be perfectly refined into a noble and seraphic ardour: I am going to the fruition of immortal beauty, and unmingled pleasure; I shall gaze on the bright original of all that's excellent and lovely; I shall hear the voice of uncreated harmony, speaking peace and unutterable extasy to my soul.

“ Adieu, my dear *Myrtilla*, my much loved sister! May angels watch your steps, and keep you in the paths of virtue!

“ Make

“ Make it your study to soften my father’s
“ cares, and add no sorrow to his hoary age :
“ I fear he will carry his grief for me to the
“ grave ; but oh ! let him never know the
“ excess of my folly. I charge you not to
“ shew him a word of this letter, nor once
“ reflect on his well-meant severity. Fare-
“ wel, till we meet in the blissful realms of
“ love.”





LETTER XV.

To Mr. ———.

SIR,

THE instances of heathen virtue that you have collected, have something in them, I confess, noble and surprizing; and your eloquence has set them in their full lustre and magnitude: But there is a Name, the *Christian* boast and hope, that darkens all human glory, and which, with a sort of pious insult, may be opposed to the most accomplished of your heroes.

The poem I have enclosed on this lofty subject, is a paraphrase on Mr. *Crashaw's Hymn to the Name of JESUS*, and there is little alteration of any thing, but the language.

A HYMN to the Name of JESUS.

*AWAKE, my soul ! my glory rise and sing !
 Awake, and all thy sacred ardour bring !
 While for unusual flight I spread a tow'ring wing :
 Awake, my lute ! proud of thy gloriqus theme,
 Let each harmonidus string
 Tremble with rapt'rous joy, and speak the mighty
 name !*

*Assist me, ev'ry gentle sound,
 Which studious art has found ;
 You that speak with silver strings,
 Or swell with tuneful breath,
 And lend the coward wings,
 To meet the face of death :
 You that in the rural strain,
 Echo thro' the peaceful plain,
 Delight the groves, and charm the guiltless swain ;
 With you that various joys afford,
 Touch'd by a skilful hand,
 Which can the pow'rs of harmony command,
 And dance with graceful art along the tuneful
 chord.
 You that with vocal music please the ear,
 Your choicest strains prepare :*

The springs which move our inmost thoughts you

[know,

And can their fiercest rage controul,

While from your lips torrents of pleasures

[flow,

And overwhelm the soul.

Let all that nature graceful calls, or sweet,

In the glorious concert meet !

Purling streams, and falling floods,

Sighing winds, and whisp'ring woods !

Let ev'ry bird of tuneful throat

Join his free ungovern'd note ;

While hills and valleys catch the sacred strain,

And everlasting echoes the blest sound retain !

With JESUS we begin, his charming name,

Shall fill the spacious song,

And yield an endless theme.

To ev'ry note the joyful word we'll place,

Our soft preludiums this alone shall grace,

And ev'ry cadence artfully prolong.

New smiles already nature wears,

All blooming looks and gay ;

The brighten'd sun crown'd with fresh beams ap-

[pears,

And darts a clearer ray.

Transporting Name !

Whose

*Whose accents to the ransom'd world proclaim
Salvation, and immeasurable grace,
Peace and good will to all the human race;
A purchas'd heav'n, and open paradise,
Unbounded joys, and never ending bliss.*

Stupendous love!

*Can man for this ungrateful prove?
JESUS the Saviour! what rebellious knee
Would not a ready homage pay to thee?*

*The martyrs glorious train,
The noble votaries of old,
In records of immortal fame enroll'd,
Wore on their breasts inscrib'd, thy mighty name:
By this, with sacred fortitude inspir'd,
With heav'nly zeal and transport fir'd,
They ran upon the pointed spear,
And leap'd into the flame;
Nor death could in a shape appear,
But what with open arms they met,
Despising all that rage could do, or proudest ty-
[rants threat.*

*Not hell itself their constancy could shake,
Its deepest stratagems they brake,
Its wildest fury trampled down,
And seiz'd with conqu'ring hands the everlasting
[crown.*

JESUS the signal for the fight they chose,
And gave a glorious onset to their foes:
In vain the pow'rs of earth and hell oppose:
JESUS, our conqu'ring chief! they cry'd;
JESUS! aloud the sounding skies reply'd.

Exalted Name!

From thee the burning seraphs catch their flame.

JESUS the God! 'tis they alone can tell,
What treasures in that title dwell.

You happy spirits, that feel its emphasis,
By this you stand confirm'd in bliss,
And know what boundless joys are stor'd
In this important word.

The glorious subject only suits
The high strain'd notes of your immortal lutes.

Then join the choir,
You bright musicians of the skies,
And with a well-proportion'd fire
Instruct us how to rise.

Let your blest harps th' imperfect lay prolong,
Complete the bold design, and close th' advent'rous
[song.





L E T T E R XVI.

Lady JANE GRAY *to* Lord GUILFORD
DUDLEY.

W I T H anguish that no force of words
can tell,
In these sad lines I take my last farewell.
Could I with less reluctance part from thee,
Approaching death had no surprize for me;
That solemn prospect should my thoughts
employ,
And banish ev'ry tender scene of joy:
But thou dost still return upon my soul;
What force the soft temptation can controul?
I meet thee still resistless in thy charms,
Sigh on thy breast, and languish in thy arms.
Oh, *Guilford*! 'tis no wretched love of life
That fills my thoughts with this uneasy strife,
The flatt'ring blandishments of youthful years,
A promis'd kingdom, nor my country's tears,
For thee alone I'd live, for thee alone
I took the fatal proffer of a crown.

No fond ambition stain'd my guiltless mind,
Inspir'd with passions of a gentler kind :
With thee I would have chose some calm re-
treat,

Far from the dull formalities of state ;
How careless, how serene my fleeting hours
Had pass'd in shady walks, and fragrant
bow'rs,

Pleas'd with the murmurs of a smooth cas-
cade,

Or near some crystal fountain, while it play'd,
Upon its flow'ry verge, with thee reclin'd,
My voice I to the melting lute had join'd,
And sooth'd thy soul with gentle strains of
love,

Answer'd by all the music of the grove.

Where rove my thoughts?—Assist me,
Grace divine !

This last, this darling object, to resign !
Forgive this frailty of my tender years,
This guilty fondness, and these female tears.
Yet Heav'n my witness stands, I would not
buy

Ev'n *Guilford's* life, with one inglorious lye ;
Nor dare my tongue, for all these ample skies
Contain, the form of sacred truth disguise.

Be

Be *Rome* ! be hell ! in their revengeful pride,
 Their flames, their racks, and tort'ring arts
 defy'd !

A thousand glorious witnesses have stood
 For this great Cause, and seal'd it with their
 blood.

Thou conqu'ring Leader of a shining train
 Of martyrs, for thy testimony slain !
 In thy victorious Name I dare engage
 The utmost force of persecuting rage :
 To men, to angels, be my soul unveil'd,
 Nor any part of heav'nly truth conceal'd !
 The glorious Cause that animates my breast,
 My lips with holy triumph shall attest ;
 Attest it with my last expiring breath,
 And smile on all the solemn pomp of death.

But darker scenes before my fancy rise,
 And nature, vanquish'd, sinks in the surprize :
 To shake my utmost virtue, 'tis decreed,
 That thou to *Rome* must first a victim bleed.
 How shall thy wretched wife that stroke sur-
 vive !

An hour beyond will be an age to live.
 But, *Guilford*, keep thy sacred truth unstain'd,
 And half my immortality is gain'd.

Ye virgin saints, that, in your early bloom,
 From cruel tyrants met a fatal doom,

That dy'd the honour of the Christian faith,
And boldly trod the same illustrious path!
To animate the youthful suff'rer's breast,
Appear in all your heav'nly glories drest;
Shew him your sparkling crowns, the bright
reward

For such distinguish'd constancy prepar'd;
Open your rosy bow'rs, your blissful seats,
Your gardens of delight, and soft retreats,
Where gentle gales ambrosial odours blow,
And springs of joy in endless currents flow;
With smiling visions recreate his soul,
And ev'ry doubting anxious thought controul.





L E T T E R X V I I .

Lord GUILFORD DUDLEY to Lady JANE
G R A Y.

MAY ev'ry watchful angel guard thy life!
My lovely princess, and my charming
wife!

For thee I importune the skies with pray'rs,
And waste the tedious hours in gloomy cares.
Were I from all the world but thee confin'd,
I'd call my stars propitious still; and kind;
These prison walls would prove a safe retreat,
From all the restless factions of the great.
Sink, curst ambition, to thy native hell!
And with thy kindred fiends for ever dwell!
Were I, my fair, again possess'd of thee,
What toys were kingdoms, and their crowns,
to me?

Inglorious in some blissful shades I'd prove
The silent joys of unmolested love.

Why

Why was thy birth deriv'd from ancient
kings?

Our mis'ry from this fatal greatness springs:
Indulgent love a gentler lot design'd,
Nor form'd for public cares thy guiltless mind;
Thy thoughts were all employ'd on softer
themes,

Tender and innocent as infants dreams:
And yet—but heav'n that title disallows,
A crown, methought, look'd glorious on thy
brows.

In ev'ry look, in all thy graceful mien,
The brightest rays of majesty were seen:
Imperial beauty sparkled in thy eyes,
I gaz'd with ecstasy, and new surprize;
A thousand times I press'd thy lovely hand,
And cry'd, *'Twas form'd a sceptre to command.*

But these gay scenes for ever take their flight,
Like some fantastic vision of the night.

O! could my death the angry Queen ap-
pease,

Could that alone a raging faction please,
Unterrified I'd meet the public storm,
And challenge death in ev'ry dreadful form.
But oh! what horrors rise!—thy tender life!—
What wou'd I speak? my lov'd, my beauteous
wife!

What

What counsel can thy wretched husband give?
 On any terms I fain wou'd have thee live.
 Forgive my stagg'ring faith, my coward heart,
 My better thoughts disclaim this shameful part.
 What course can my distracting passions take,
 When thou, when truth, when heav'n itself 's
 at stake?

To endless darkness would I drag thee down,
 And poorly rob thee of a martyr's crown?
 May heav'n forbid!—I'll be thy joyful guide,
 Nor shall the fatal stroke our souls divide.

O death! where is thy boasted conquest now?
 Where are the frowns and terrors of thy brow?
 Thou hast an angel's heav'nly form and air,
 Pleasures and graces in thy train appear:
 Ten thousand kind transporting scenes arise;
 Oh, come, my fair! they call us to the skies,
 Beauties, like thee, in nature's early pride,
 Undaunted, for their sacred faith have dy'd;
 With their, with all th' illustrious names of old,
 The *British* glory, thine shall be inroll'd.





LETTER XVIII.

To Mrs. ———.

MADAM,

I Cannot say you have turned me into an angel ; I have too much modesty to compliment you or myself with such miracles ; but you have certainly given an elevation to my mind, which I never before experienced : And without any design, but doing you justice, I may own, that from a savage, I am become human ; and from a libertine, regular and consistent ; from a lover, you have metamorphosed me into a reasonable creature. However odd this confession appears, this is making you a greater compliment than swearing you have made me a lunatic, and a madman. It is more glorious for you, to be valued by a man in his right senses, than to be stared at by one quite out of his wits : My being more reasonable, does not argue that you are less amiable.

For

*For inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
And sanctity of manners, improve your charms.*

ADDISON.

You have convinced me, that Virtue is more than an empty name, that it is the most sacred reality. I see, I acknowledge the bright *Divinity*: *she* insults my infidelity by a thousand modern instances of her power; among the youthful and mature, the gentle and severe, *she* boasts her votaries: *Virtue* retires no more to cottages and cells, but, secure of public triumph and applause, *she* makes the *British* court *her* imperial residence.

*The Goddess all her glorious self appears,
When CAROLINA's royal form she wears.
With ev'ry conqu'ring charm she stands reveal'd,
While subject hearts their glad allegiance yield.*

Long may this propitious Queen be the joy and boast of a great and happy nation! You find I am grown public-spirited: It is you have given this generous ardour to my soul, and kindled the sincerest zeal for the honour of my king and country. I grow impatient to draw my sword in their defence

fence, and would commence the hero : Nor will I dissemble the truth, but freely own to you, that in my state of infidelity, my bravery was all affected, and often disguised the most slavish terrors.

I perceive, Madam, it is my own panegyric I am writing, rather than yours. Indeed, my character cannot be in better hands ; I have certainly done myself justice, and been punctual in the recital of my good qualities, and with great modesty have thought fit to propose myself, as an example of the reformation of manners.

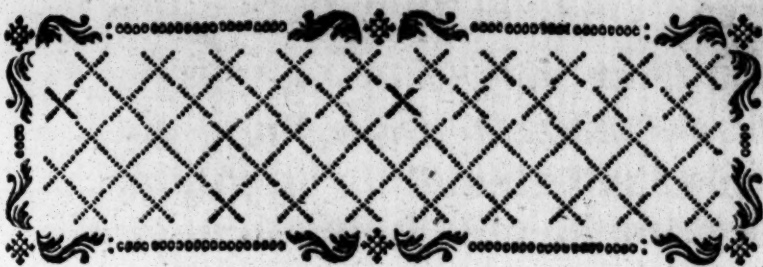
You will conclude I am in a disposition to write a moral essay, rather than a love-letter, which was really my prime intention ; but you have ridiculed all my figures of rhetoric on that subject, so that I am forced to change my style, in my own defence : But I hope I am intelligible, in assuring you I am, without reserve,

M A D A M,

Your most devoted,

And most humble Servant,

ALBANUS.



L E T T E R S

T O

C L E O R A.

L E T T E R I.

M A D A M,



T is 'certainly better for your-
self, and more for the security
of mankind, that you should
live in some rural abode, than
appear in the world; such
persons as you are fatal to the public tran-
quillity, and do mischief without ever de-
signing it: But I must own, when belles
and

and beaux retire to country shades for the sake of heavenly contemplation, the world will be well reformed. A hermit's life might be tolerable, while the serious hours are divided between *Hyde-Park* and the *Opera*; but a more distant retreat in the full pride of your charms and youth, would be very extraordinary. To be convinced by so early experience, that mankind are amused only with dreams and fantastic appearances, must proceed from a superior degree of virtue and good sense. After a thousand convictions of the vanity of their pursuits, how few know the emphasis of these few lines!

*Sweet solitude! when life's gay hours are past,
Howe'er we range, in thee we fix at last;
Toss'd thro' tempestuous seas, (the voyage o'er)
Pale, we look back, and bless the friendly shore.
Our own strict judges, our past life we scan,
And ask if virtue has enlarged the span:
If bright the prospect, we the grave defy,
Trust future ages, and contented die.*

TICKELL.

Nothing is, perhaps, more terrible to the imagination than an absolute solitude; yet I must

must own such a retreat as disengages the mind from those interests and passions which mankind generally pursue, appears to me the most certain way to happiness: Quietly to withdraw from the crowd, and leave the gay and ambitious to divide the honours and pleasures of the world, without being a rival or competitor in any of these advantages, must leave a person in perfect and unenvied repose.

Without any apology, I am going to talk to myself; and what follows, may be properly called a digression.

Let me lose the remembrance of this busy world, and hear no more of its distracting tumults! Ye vain grandeurs of the earth! Ye perishing riches and fantastic pleasures! what are your proudest boasts? Can you yield undecaying delights, joys becoming the dignity of reason, and the capacities of an immortal mind? Ask the happy spirits above, at what price they value their enjoyments; ask them, if the whole creation should purchase one moment's interval of their bliss. No: — one beam of celestial light obscures the glory, and casts a reproach on all the beauty this world can boast.

This

This is talking in buskins, you will think ;
and, indeed, I may resign crowns and sceptres,
and give up the grandeurs of the world, with
as much imaginary triumph, as a hero might
fight battles, and conquer armies, in a dream.

In the height of this romantic insult, I
am,

MADAM,

Your most obliged humble Servant.





L E T T E R II.

To the same.

M A D A M,

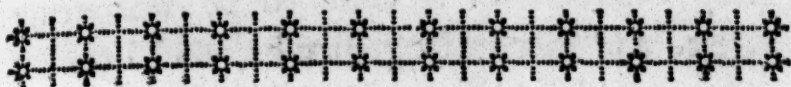
I Am certainly dead and buried, according to your notions of life; interred in the silence and obscurity of a country retreat, far from the dear town, and all its joys; which, in your gay apprehensions, cannot properly be called living. But for me, (who ask nothing but ease and liberty, in order to be happy) I am willing to inform you, I am in a state of existence, and capable of the entertainment your wit would have given me, if you had been so obliging as to have filled the blank paper you sent: Nothing could be more nicely malicious, nor is it possible for you to imagine, how the sight of so much clean paper tormented me. How many sparkling things could you have writ,
and

and not exhausted your stock, nor got the vapours by over-studying yourself! But I hope you will make me some reparation, by the length of your next. I will not insist on your writing sense or reason, if that will be any privilege to you: but tho' nonsense from you would be a great novelty, it would cost you so much pains to write it, that I am afraid you would send me a shorter Epistle than your last. I am,

M A D A M,

Your most obedient, &c.





L E T T E R III.

To the same.

I Have neglected writing so long, that I am almost ashamed to own I am still alive : I ought to have died in pure civility, which would have been the only sufficient excuse for my silence. But, really, Madam, it costs me more pains to indite an epistle to you, than it would to write a book to some sort of readers ; and I cannot help wishing I had more wit, or you a great deal less.

Your prohibition of *Lilliput* paper, will drive me to great extremities ; and, what I most fear, will often prove a severe exercise to the patience of my gentle reader. I am reduced to a necessity of talking of this world, or the next : For the *next*, you are so happy at present, that you may not be always disposed to think of so solemn a subject ; and for *this*, I am entirely ignorant :
My

My conversation is confined to whispering trees, and murmuring brooks, and I cannot give you the least intelligence of what passes among mortals.

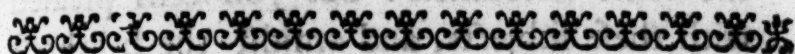
My fate, Madam, is just the reverse of yours : You had a great many things in your head, but wanted paper ; I have clean paper enough, but nothing at all in my head ; 'tis a *vacuum*, a dismal emptiness ; and unless I fill the blank paper with a curious flourish of a true lover's knot, I must subscribe,

M A D A M,

Your most obliged humble Servant.



LETTER IV.



To the same.

MADAM,

THE *Sylvan* scenes never appeared more beautiful, (not even in Mr. *Pope's Pastorals*) than in those soft lines you enclosed: I hope you will find all the joys that peace and innocence can give, in your charming retreat. Your description has led my imagination thro' a thousand enchanting scenes: I wish you may long enjoy those fine walks you are contriving; not that I wish you may see as many returning springs, as the fair damsels before the deluge, when an insulting beauty might take fifty years deliberation to answer a *Billet-doux*, and act the tyrant five hundred years, in the full pride of her charms. But you shew no ambition at all of this nature; and I am persuaded, it is no manner of mortification to you, that your conquests are limited to a shorter date.

I am going, Madam, to put you in mind again, that you are mortal: I fancy you

open my letters with as much gravity as you would a funeral sermon, and read them with the same seriousness: but you seem pleased with these subjects, and amidst the brightest advantages of youth and fortune, are a reasonable creature, as well as a fine lady. These sort of reflections from me are not the vapours; I am pretty free from the spleen, as you know all half-witted people are: But, in the gayest disposition, death would have a dismal view, and wear ten thousand horrors, if an immortality beyond it did not brighten the scene.

Without this prospect it would not be worth the while to begin a generous friendship: When we have seen a few more setting suns, (for rising suns some people never see) when a few more flying hours are past, with life to resign the most exalted of human satisfactions, would heighten all the horrors of the grave.

I might with less trouble recommend some good book to your perusal, and keep this divinity for my own use. You will be overjoyed that I am come to a conclusion, and am,

M A D A M,

Yours, &c.



L E T T E R V.

To the same.

MADAM,

YOUR reflections on——'s death have something in them so just and agreeable, that I am recompensed for his loss, whatever damage the rest of the world suffer by it.

It pleases me to find you so often returning to a subject, that most people take so much pains to avoid. If mortality is the pride and happiness of human nature, why should it not be mentioned with the same gaiety, with which we talk of other agreeable things? The other world is at least a greater novelty than this; nor is it such a glorious round of action, to eat, to drink, and sleep, that people should have an aversion to think, if not to try what a variety of enjoyments a future life will give them. But to forget this, is the design of all the thoughtless amusements

the wit of man can invent. What Monsieur Paschal says, is perfectly just.

* *L'origine de toutes les occupations tumultueuses des hommes, & de tout ce qu'on appelle divertissement ou passe tems, est en effet que d'y laisser passer le tems sans le sentir, ou le pkitot sans le sentir soymême, & d'éviter en perdant cette partie de la vie le dégoût intérieur. L'ame est jetté dans le corps pour y faire un séjour de peu de durée. Elle sçait que ce n'est qu'un passage à un voyage éternel, & qu'elle n'a que le peu de tems que dure la vie pour s'y préparer.* Mais ce

* This is the ground of all the tumultuary business, of all the trifling diversions amongst men; in which our general aim is to make the time pass off our hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling ourselves, and by getting rid of this small portion of life, to avoid inward disgust. The soul is sent into the body to be the sojourner of a few days: She knows that this is but a stop, till she may embark for eternity, and that a small space is allow'd her to prepare for the voyage; and yet this moment which remains does so strangely oppress and perplex her, that she only studies how to close it: she feels an intolerable burthen, in being obliged to live with herself, and think of herself, and therefore her principal care is to forget herself, and to let this short and precious moment pass away without reflection, by amusing herself with things which prevent the notice of its speed.

peu, le commode si fort, & l'embarasse si étrangement, qu'elle ne songe qu'à le perdre. Celuy est une peine insupportable à vivre & de penser à soy. Ainsi tout son soin est de s'oublier soy-même, & de laisser couler le tems si court & si pretieux sans reflection, en s'occupant des choses qui l'empeschent d'y penser.

I will stop here, or you will certainly think I am going to transcribe the whole book, to save you the trouble of throwing away your money on a *Moral Essay*: And perhaps, Madam, you may not be in so grave a humour, as when you wrote last; for all human things are changeable, and have sometimes good, and sometimes evil dispositions; and in what circumstance this will find you, is an uncertainty to,

MADAM,

Your most obedient,

And most humble Servant.



LETTER VI.

To the same.

YOU will find, Madam, to your grief, I have not hired the carrier to lose the large paper you sent me; but I have certainly more compassion for you than to fill it. One would think you intended I should write a *Western Journal*, and give you a full and true relation of all the ghosts and apparitions that are seen in the County of———; for these are the only remarkable events which happen here.

These are the regions of sleep and repose, not of action: For my own part, I neither hope, nor fear, contrive, nor design any thing, that relates to this mortal life: but am as much at rest as the people that are sleeping in their sepulchres. I am in some doubt whether I be-
long

long to the society of the living or the dead,
and am ready to ask myself,

Is this existence real, or a dream?

I cannot persuade myself to wish you any thing but just what you are, a mere earthly creature. It would be too great a disadvantage to find you in a rank of beings superior to mortals : I am so sensible of the distance at present, that I cannot wish you in a greater elevation. If I asked any thing, perhaps it would be to set you more on an equality, that I might have an opportunity to convince you how sincere and disinterested my friendship is.

By your account, L— B—— lives a very unactive and inglorious life : Tho' he has been so long as four months in the world, he has had so few adventures, that I can but just stretch my invention to compose half a song for him :

*'Thou pretty, smiling, guiltless thing !
Of thee what can the Muses sing ?
Unless they speak in prophecy,
How great a Hero thou shalt be ;*

*Thy country's patron, and the grace
Of———'s long illustrious race.*

With verse and prose, reflections gay and serious, some with a meaning, and others without any meaning at all, I am at last, to your unspeakable satisfaction, come to an end of this fine Epistle, and am going to subscribe myself,

MADAM,

Yours, &c.





LETTER VII.

To the same.

MADAM,

YOUR concern for Lord ———, is the most melancholy circumstance in the account you have given me of his death. The toil, the long fatigue is past, and all to come is rest and endless joy. The happy spirit is for ever wandering now,

——— *Thro' boundless realms of bliss,*

Where pleasure blossoms with eternal spring.

You express yourself with so much good sense and true greatness of mind on this occasion, that nothing could set your character in a more agreeable light: The death of your friends seems to reconcile your thoughts to the unknown regions.

L 5

With

With regard to yourself, it might be no disadvantage to quit the world so early: To die in the pride of life, and all the splendour of youthful virtue, has something far more glorious than to languish out the dregs of life in the exercise of no virtue but patience.

You find, Madam, I am persuading you to die with great composure: I suppose you think yourself obliged to me for resigning my friends to their destiny with so much calmness and submission; but really 'tis in mere charity to you; for if you grow wise so soon, I cannot imagine how you will fill up the tedious round of threescore years and ten, if Heaven, for the happiness of mankind, should continue your life to that date.

How many people would suspend their part in the joys of paradise till the heavens are no more, for the most trifling of these amusements which you despise! But while you think so justly of this world and the next, I must confess, the manner of life, to which your quality confines you, excites my compassion. Indeed, you may dispense with me for practising this height of charity, while you are the object of almost every body's envy. But be as happy as the world can make you, 'tis all

all but sleeping and dreaming; and, as Mr. Law says, *being amused with a vain succession of shadows.*

This quotation you may imagine, is to shew my great reading: When I am writing to you, I would indeed shine with every advantage; but the height of my ambition is being,

MADAM,

Yours, &c.





LETTER VIII.

To the same.

MADAM,

I Find it is generally a very selfish motive that made me write to you, my design being to extort an answer. If you had but so much disinterested charity, as to write without expecting a reply, I should certainly receive the favour with the utmost gratitude and modesty : However, it is well that you indulge my talent of impertinence, and never strictly insist on common sense.

At present I cannot entertain myself, much less you ; the creation seems to want variety, and I am as much inclined to cry for more worlds as *Alexander the Great* was, only my uneasiness is for the sake of novelty ; for I have little ambition, not enough to leave you in an error, tho' to my own advantage.

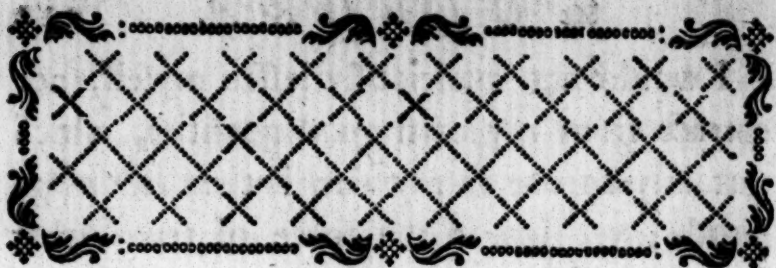
I would

I would not maliciously lessen myself, nor detract from my own good qualities, which certainly appear to my view in their full magnitude; yet such is the force of truth, that I must confess, you have given me a sort of imaginary character, and I am an heroine of your own making; as great minds always suppose they find in others the same virtues they really possess themselves.

My letter is of a convenient length, and you will now gladly dismiss

Your most humble Servant.





L E T T E R S

T O T H E

A U T H O R.

By another H A N D.

L E T T E R I.



W A S so far from thinking your letter the effect of the spleen, that I am persuaded it was written in one of your gayest intervals : To a mind turned like yours, the thoughts of death must be all serene and agreeable. I fancy you will be pleased with these lines, which
Monfieur

Monfieur *Menard* ordered to be written over his closet-door. *

*Las d'esperer & de me plaindre,
De l'amour des grands & du sort,
C'est ici que j'attens la mort,
Sans la defirer, ou la craindre.*

C'est bien le caractere, le plus beau, & le plus rare qu'on peut avoir : “ This character is the “ best, finest, and most rare that we can possibly have.” But the eternal hurry that attends an exalted station, needs a higher pitch of virtue, to keep the mind in a proper temper to meet our dissolution, than is generally attained ; and dying in pomp gives a thousand terrors to the fatal period.

*Had I been born some humble villager,
And in a peaceful cottage pass'd my days,
Far from the guilty pageantry of courts,
In innocence my life had calmly pass'd,
And with a smile I might resign my breath.*

* Weary'd with hoping and bewailing,
For love of Fortune and the Great,
No wish or fear of *Death* prevailing,
Its coming patiently I wait.

The

The world has, I think, as few charms for me, as for most people of my age : but I must own, I feel a sort of reluctance to part with every thing below, and a dread to enter on those unknown regions, from whence none return to tell us what they find.

Betwixt the whistling of the wind, and the roaring of a fall of water, I have at present a solemn and agreeable concert, and cannot help addressing myself with *Mira* to the winter.

*To thee my gently drooping head I bend,
Thy sigh, my sister, and thy tear, my friend ;
On thee I muse, and in thy hast'ning sun
See life expiring, ere 'tis well begun :
Thy sick'ning ray, and venerable gloom,
Shew life's last scene, the solitary tomb.*

Adieu,

CLEORA.





L E T T E R II.

WHITHER shall I direct for you? Are you still an inhabitant of the earth, or ascended to the æthereal regions? Am I addressing a mortal, or an immortal spirit? In what language must I speak? If you are still in this world, I am determined to molest you; and I hope this Letter will find you in the midst of some agreeable reverie, and chase the gaudy vision from your fancy.

I cannot praise your virtue in becoming a recluse, and getting a victory by a cowardly flight: I would have you raise your character, by venturing into this wicked town, and by despising the world in the midst of dazzling temptations.

To read a treatise of devotion, instead of a new play, and preserve your serious temper, surrounded with vanity and diversions, would be a more heroical part, than enjoying an inglorious tranquillity among purling streams, and flowery meadows.

Besides,

Besides, here would be the addition of mortification to heighten your virtue : for you would scarce find the crying of *Small-coal* as harmonious a sound, as the warbling of nightingales ; nor the smell of *sea-coal* smoke, as fragrant as the breath of opening violets and primroses.

But my comparisons are so much to the advantage of the country, that I am afraid you will suspect my advice to be the effect of envy ; and I had as good throw off a disguise, and own that at present my way of living is a series of impertinence ; and were it to continue,

*Far rather would I in some humble cell,
Distant from all that's gay, for ever dwell,
Than waste my flying hours, and thus divide
My time, 'twixt folly, calumny, and pride ;
Still trifling, thus debase the gift of sense,
And live the slave of dull impertinence.*

I have not yet had the curiosity to see the new Opera : The weather is so hot, that I think shady groves and crystal streams more refreshing than a crowded theatre. Indeed, the town was never more disagreeable to me than now : I wish I knew whether it proceeds
from

from being more wise, or more dull ; I am afraid the latter ; for as to an increase of wisdom, I cannot say I am sensible of it in any other instance.

The greatest happiness, perhaps, that can be attained in this world, is only insipid indolence, and not any real pleasure : How different does it prove from those gay visions that youth forms to itself, when it first launches out into the flattering ocean ! How soon do tempests of trouble and confusion rise, while nothing is so common as the desire of long life ; and yet how small a part of mankind would care to trace back their lives again in the same steps they did before ! Though perhaps the only variety would be, to change one folly for another ; to quit the playhouse for *Ombre*, or the gentle strains of the opera for the serious contemplation of their own dear persons in a looking glass.

I am yours,

CLEORA.



L E T T E R III.

I Beg you not to write any more on *Lilliput* paper : I am almost afraid to open your Letter, for fear of finding, after a respectful margin, *Madam* at the top, and your name at the bottom, and trackless wastes of blank paper between, for me to fill up at my leisure.

You will be surprized to find, that at a time when my health is declining, I should be planting trees, and laying out walks, as if I thought I had two or three hundred years to enjoy them. I need not assure you, I have no such expectations ; but it gives me an innocent delight to form these sylvan scenes in an irregular manner, and with a secret art to imitate nature in her negligent appearance.

I have no giants in yew, nor tygers or birds in holly ; but instead of them, firs and pines, that grow just as nature designed them ; and so intermixed with woodbines,
fyringas,

syringas, and other flowery shrubs, that in a few months they will be a perfect wilderness of sweets.

The satisfaction I take in this undertaking, makes me often fancy I am not sincere in my thoughts of soon leaving it: I am as busy in my garden, and as much surfeited with the *Grande Monde*, as ever *Dioclesian* was.

† *Sento qualche stupidita che me impedisce di godere una vita nella corte piena di splendore e cerimonia, tanto che quella chi si trova nella campagna senza gloria & senza turbenza.*

Every plant that flourishes gives me a pleasure, and every drooping tree infects me with languishing; I watch every decay among my flowers, as a celebrated beauty would do grey hairs, or wrinkles.

I have two or three sheep that perplex me as much as *le Berger Extravagant's* flock did him; and were I to indulge my rural delights, and return no more to the noisy town,

† I feel within me a kind of stupidity which hinders me to enjoy that happiness at a court taken up with splendour and ceremony, that I relish in a country life free from pomp and hurry.

I should

I should fall into the most soothing and agreeable madness imaginable.

*Come, Amaryllis, come, and with me share
The blooming woodbines, and the fragrant air,
Together o'er the flow'ry walks we'll rove,
Or sit beneath the shelter of the grove :
While flocks upon the hills around us bleat,
And echoes to the streams their voice repeat.
Among the willows in a gloomy shade
By nature form'd, there rushes a cascade ;
Upon its banks you undisturb'd may lie,
While contemplation wafts you to the sky.*

CLEORA.





L E T T E R IV.

PEOPLE seem at present more busily employed in preparing for the King's birthday, than for their own last; and appear to be in greater anxiety for a seat in the dancing-room, than for a seat in paradise.

I was last night with ———; a barge of music followed us; but in the midst of this gaiety your letter was not the only thing that put me in mind of mortality: I had such a violent pain in my head, that neither the wit of the company, the softness of the music, nor the beauty of the evening, could give me any sincere delight.——If pleasure be the lot of man, it must be in something beyond the grave; for on this side constant experience tells us, all his vanity.

But this confession has hardly any influence on human conduct; for people in a high rank must often act against their reason, to avoid being thought unfashionable; and for
fear

fear of being thought mad by the modish world, must act in a manner which they are sensible is being truly so, to keep in vogue with their polite contemporaries.

I cannot forbear thinking with myself, that if a Being endowed with reason and a capacity of judging, (an inhabitant of another planet, and an utter stranger to our nature) could take a view of our actions, he would be at a loss what to imagine we were; and had he no informer, but were to judge by our conduct, he would certainly either imagine that we were a species who were insured always to live in the world we now inhabit; or else, that after enjoying ourselves here as long as we could, we were to be insensible for ever, without the least expectation of a future judgment, punishment, or reward.

You would hardly make an apology for desiring me to write to you, if you knew how much pleasure the injunction gives to

Yours unalterably,



L E T T E R V.

THE news of my Lord ——'s death has been so great a shock to me, that I want all your arguments against long life, to reconcile me to the shortness of his, at the latter end of seventy years ; I have much ado to think that he did not die too young, since he had strength enough to endure the most exquisite torments. I loved him most sincerely as a relation, and esteemed him as a most valuable and faithful friend. My thoughts are continually employed about him, and I grieve for my own loss, and rejoice at his gain in the same moment ; and cannot forbear following him with my speculations to the mansions of eternal peace, and enquiring with Mr. Tickell, in his verses on the death of Mr. Addison,

*In what new region to the just assign'd,
What new employments please th' unbod'y'd mind ?
A winged virtue, thro' th' ethereal sky,
From world to world unweary'd does he fly ?*

*Or curious trace the long laborious maze
Of Heav'n's decrees, where wond'ring angels
gaze?*

*Does he delight to hear bold seraphs tell
How Michael battled, and the Dragon fell?
Or, mix'd with milder cherubim, to glow
In hymns of love? —*

I cannot help fancying, how his soul is charm'd to find itself at liberty, and no longer chain'd to an infirm body, which continually clogged it in all its operations. How is he transported to be admitted to the presence of God his Saviour! And with what delight (if we may be allowed to conjecture that he remembers her) will he see his wife, for whom he has shed so many tears, in all the pomp of celestial glory! With what pleasure will he gaze upon the skies, while they unfold their sparkling treasures! and with what joy and wonder observe the planets in their courses, and look into all the deep philosophy of heaven! with what attention listen to the songs of angels, while they tune their golden lyres to the praise of God and of the *Lamb*! And how will his heart overflow with gratitude to his Saviour, while he reflects on what he suffered to purchase these pleasures for him!

When

to the AUTHOR. 243

When I consider the advantages of his change, I blame my grief : And yet who can forbear to lament the best of friends, the honestest of men, and the most agreeable companion that ever was ? especially in an age like this, where so little honour, friendship, and sincerity, are to be found. But I am not going to write a satire upon mankind, and therefore will say no more, but that

I am faithfully yours,

CLEORA.





LETTER VI.

To CLORINDA.

YOU ask me, my dear *Clorinda*, what is the reason of the deep melancholy you observe in me, and are amazed to see how little relish I have for the things which amuse other people of my age and quality. Your partiality for me makes you fancy that my indifference is the result of a good understanding, and that the force of my judgment has been able to subdue my passions: but, alas! how are you mistaken! my melancholy proceeds from the irregularity of my affections; love, vanity, distrust, and repentance, conspire to rack me; and,

*When I look back on all my former days,
The only comfort the review affords,
Is, that they're past* —

For

*For thro' their course I cannot recollect
 One free from sorrow, guilt, or disappointment :
 Yet heedless still thro' the same paths I stray,
 And rashly venture on the dang'rous road ;
 With open eyes like one asleep I walk,
 And drink the cup, altho' I know 'tis poison'd.
 Why am I led thus captive by my will ?
 While reason, faithful guide, for ever warns
 My drowsy soul, to shun impending danger.
 This night may be my last ; I ne'er again
 May see the dawning of another morn :
 Shall I forego the joys of heav'n, to sooth
 A wayward fancy, or destructive passion ?
 Ah, no ! let ev'ry faculty unite
 To break the yoke ! Reason, resume thy sway,
 And calm these wild disorders of my breast !
 Whisper thy sacred dictates to my heart,
 And bend it to th' observance of thy laws !
 Inspire my soul with ev'ry heav'nly thought,
 And shew me wisdom's paths ! direct my steps,
 Nor leave me thus benighted !*

There is not in nature a greater contra-
 diction than my thoughts and actions, and it
 is impossible for me to account why they are
 so : I pursue the pleasures of the world, at
 the same time that I know them to be fleet-

ing and worthless. I distract myself about the opinion of the public, tho' I despise the injustice of its censures : I cannot forbear repining at my unhappy circumstances, in suffering myself to be tormented with the ingratitude of some, whom I thought my friends, nor weeping while I indulge a hopeless passion ; though I know that

*Quickly will my glass of life be run,
And with it all my joys and sorrows gone :
Then I no more shall feel love's cruel fire,
But cold and peaceful to the grave retire ;
No more shall weep for the licentious wrongs
Of judgments rash, or scourge of scandalous
tongues.*

And yet, not even this reflection can arm me with patience : I am uneasy with my faults, without correcting them ; and in love with my duty, without practising it : I act contrary to my highest reason, and turn rebel to the authority of my own judgment.

After this account of me, you will not wonder that I retire as much as I can from noise and hurry ; though no shade is gloomy enough to hide my folly from my eyes, nor
any

to the AUTHOR. 247

any retreat calm enough to lull my passions. However, I do not yet despair of conquering these vexations, by the assistance of Religion, and the Grace of that God, who will always be found by those who seek him, in an humble sense of their own unworthiness, and a firm reliance upon his mercy.

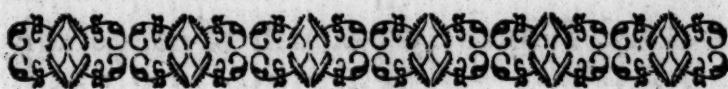
I am never in so whimsical a situation of mind in the midst of all my absurdities, as to forget that I am, by a thousand obligations,

Your faithful Friend,

And obliged Servant,

I R I S.





LETTER VII.

To ALMIRA.

My dear ALMIRA,

YOU will be extremely afflicted, though not surprized, to hear, that after languishing so many months, the unhappy *Teraminta* yesterday expired in my arms. The day before her death she ordered every body but me to leave the room, and desired me to sit down by her bed-side ; then taking me by the hand, she spoke to me in the following manner :

I see, my faithful *Emilia*, that you are sinking under the affliction which you suffer, to find that a few hours will deprive you not only of a sincere and tender friend, but of a person whom your partiality inclines you to believe has some merit. I cannot leave you under this mistake, and go out of the world with the guilt of deceiving you ; it is not possible

possible for me to let you waste your tears for a wretch who is unworthy of them : Yet let what I have suffered for my crimes induce you to compassion, and my hard fate warn you, to guard against the first glimmerings of a guilty passion ; for that has been my ruin. You know I was married extremely young, and upon the fashionable unhappy views of estate and titles. However, my husband's merit, (which to my eternal confusion I must ever acknowledge) joined to his fondness for me, gained so far upon my heart, that if I had not all the passion that attends love, I had all the tenderness of an exalted friendship for him. In this calm state I passed the first six years of our marriage, and had several children by him : But then his public employment obliged him to enquire for a person to assist him in the discharge of his office : He had a young man recommended to him for that purpose, whom he took into his house : He had ten thousand good qualities ; he was just three and twenty, and perfectly beautiful, at least to me he appeared so : But why should I describe him to you, or strive to conceal the temptation, while I own the guilt ? You know the de-

stroyer of my peace and his own ; it is the wretched *Alonzo*. He had not been long in the family before I began to have an affection for him, that frightened me : His name affected me, I could not hear him mentioned without trembling, or see him unexpectedly without becoming as pale as ashes, and in a few months I found my heart was entirely given up to him. What eloquence can express my grief at this discovery ? My vows, my husband's merit, my family, my fame, now appeared to me in their full force, and joined to rack me. I passed my nights in tears, and rose more weary than I lay down. I flew to religious books for succour, but in vain ; I had neglected the danger till it was irretrievable. I wandered in my house and gardens more like a guilty ghost than a living creature : And to add to my distress, I observed an unusual melancholy in the face of my dear *Alonzo* : He was always in my way, alone and pensive. One evening, as I was standing just without the door in the court before my house, observing the moon and stars, which were shining in their full splendour, and wishing myself above those glittering luminaries, that I might be no longer

longer subject to that criminal passion, which rendered my life a burthen, I chanced to put my hands behind me : I had not stood long in that posture before I thought I felt something gently touch my hand, and looking round I found it to be *Alonzo* ; who seeing me about to leave him, took one of my hands, and holding it betwixt his, pressed it to his bosom with an air of tenderness which pierced my very soul. However, I was enough mistress of myself to ask him, what behaviour of mine had encouraged him to hope that I would endure so unaccountable an insolence. He told me, that what he did was not the effect of hope, but of absolute despair ; that his misery was grown to such an height, that it was incapable of receiving any aggravation ; and that though he loved me to distraction, he did not even entertain a wish, that I should return a passion so much below me ; and that if I could forgive the frenzy that had brought him to make this declaration, he would for the future observe an eternal silence. At these words he burst into tears, and I left him with the utmost precipitation, to conceal a tenderness which neither the obligations of my

my duty, or any other reflection, were strong enough to suppress. I was now sunk to the depth of misery; I had listened to the declaration of a love forbidden by all the laws of Heaven and Earth, and contrary to every principle of virtue which my education had instilled into my soul. I knew not what method to take to free myself and *Alonzo* from so unhappy a situation: Sometimes I resolved to feign some cause of dislike, and prevail with my husband to discharge him. When I had summoned all my aids of virtue, modesty, and pride, and fancied myself able to make the dreadful proposal, my passion brought back his idea to my heart, with all the charms of his mind and person, and represented him not only ruined in his peace, but in his fortune, by my severity. Several months passed in this state of anxiety, and he religiously observed his word, nor ever once mentioned his passion; but at last the disorder of his mind threw him into a fever, and his life was despaired of. Judge what I endured upon this occasion: However, conscious modesty hindered me from going near him in his illness, which lasted almost a fortnight, but at last his youth, and the strength

strength of his constitution, overcame his disease, and he was able to get up the stairs that led to my apartment, and was at the door of it just as I went to call some of the servants. At that moment every good angel left me, and I could not forbear expressing my joy to find him able to leave his bed. *Alas!* said he, *why do you wish my misery prolonged? Death is my only road to peace, since I am hated by you.* These words, joined with the paleness of his looks, disarmed all my resolutions, and I told him a secret which I ought rather to have died than have uttered: I owned my passion, and begged him to live for my sake, if not for his own. He was amazed and overjoyed at this confession, and soon recovered his health. We now went on in a thoughtless road of pleasure, and indulged our mutual passion, till at last he pressed me to give him the most guilty proofs of it; and strengthened his entreaties with all the arguments that so good an understanding, assisted by the powers of hell, could inspire. But as passionately as I loved him, he could not, with all his eloquence, erase the sentiments of innate virtue, and convictions of religion, from my soul.

foul. I was not enough abandoned, but to look on adultery as a point of horror not to be outlived ; and tho' I allowed him liberties, which I am now convinced were guilty, yet I always kept myself from the last steps of vice, and was so happy, that instead of my yielding to his arguments, he was convinced by mine, and asked pardon of God and me, for the criminal design he had pursued. We now resolved, by the strictness of our lives, to make what amends we could for the errors we had fallen into ; and for these last three years have applied ourselves seriously to the securing of our salvation : But we have never been able to conquer our unhappy passion, tho' we have suppressed the effects of it. It is this eternal contradiction, joined to the remorse I feel for my ingratitude to the best of husbands, which has brought me into the condition you see. Happy, if by losing my life, I could atone for my injustice ! How gentle would my agonies appear, if by their excess I could hope that they would be accepted as part of my punishment ! Whatever I could suffer here, would be joyful to me, were I sure it could intitle me to mercy hereafter. Here she fell into a swoon, but quickly revived,

vived, and lived till next day. About an hour before she died, she sent for her husband and children, and took leave of them with great tenderness; and then lying down as if she would sleep, expired in a few minutes. They are in vast affliction for her; but no words can paint the despair of *Alonzo*; he has neither spoke nor eat since her death, and seems so perfectly stupified, that I fear his senses are gone for ever.

Adieu, my dear *Almira*! My tears flow so fast, that I can write no more.

EMILIA.





LETTER VIII.

By the same Hand.

My LORD,

I Have, at last, taken the only means left me, to free myself from your importunities, and the weakness of my own heart, which argued but too much on your side. I found my fame, and every other consideration, too light, when weighed in the balance against your love; but the force of religion has turned the scale, and made me resolve to spend the remainder of my weeping days in a convent: It is in that holy retreat that I hope to find the peace which I lost in the world. You cannot be sorry for this resolution, when you consider of it: For not all the polite maxims of the present age are sufficient to discountenance virtue, or bring vice into reputation; or could they prevail in this world, would they be admitted at God's

God's tribunal. Your Lordship may call this bigotry, or any other name, which the levity of your fancy, or modish principles, can inspire you with; but a day will come, in which you will find it sacred truth; and you will be glad, that by shutting myself for ever from your sight, I hindered you from the guilt you have pursued, and put it out of your power to ruin me. It would be no very pleasing reflection on your death-bed, that you had seduced a soul from the paths of peace and virtue; and to give yourself a fashionable liberty, had entailed misery and infamy on a family, who have served you with zeal and affection. What has my aged father left undone to support your interest in the country? With what tenderness did my mother educate your two young sisters, who were committed to her care? And, in return, you would bring their only daughter to the last degree of sin and shame: This may be genteel, but surely it is not noble. How false are your sentiments of honour and justice! You thought it would be a reflection on your character, to marry into a family so much below you in birth and fortune; but are not ashamed to return a
thousand

thousand obligations (pardon me, my Lord; for great as you are, I must call them such) with the highest injury. And though you have not succeeded in your guilt as to that, you robbed two ancient servants, nay, friends of yours, of the joy of their eyes, and delight of their age, their only child; who by your licentious love is forced to seclude herself from them, and the whole world, for ever. I dread to think how they will support this affliction. I left a letter on the table to acquaint my mother with my retreat, but concealed the cause, for your sister's sake; since she might, perhaps, resolve to discharge herself from an office, which she has executed with so much care, and has produced her so cruel a requital. Let the sorrow you brought upon my parents content you, and do not carry ruin into another family. Why should you employ the finest understanding, and the most graceful person, to promote the cause of hell? And why must the rank, power, and wealth, which were given you to diffuse happiness all round you, only serve to make you capable of splendid mischief?

I am now in a sanctuary, where I cannot be the entertainment of your idle hours; and
where

where the time I spent in listening to you, shall now be employed in praying for your reformation; the tears which I have often poured out in vain, to dissuade you from your guilty enterprize, shall be shed before God for your sins: For tho' you have used me with the utmost cruelty; your eternal welfare will always be the tenderest concern of

The unhappy ANASTASIA.





LETTER IX.

To LEONORA.

I Have been on the very borders of the grave, and have for several months endured all the pains and languishments of a dangerous illness; but it has pleased God to restore me to so tolerable a measure of health, that I am now able to think and write again: And with what pleasure do I feel myself once more at ease!

How ungrateful are the generality of mankind while they enjoy this blessing! and how seldom (when they are well) do they reflect on the inconvenience and faintness, the weariness and pains, which attend a sick bed! I never was sensible what I owed to God for my health, till I came to want it. While my blood flowed with an even uninterrupted course in its channels, and my arteries and sinews were able to perform their several functions,

functions, I overlooked that mercy which had contrived them for those operations; but as soon as they were obstructed, I was sensible of their value: And while I sickened at the sight of my food, I envied the peasant, whose health enabled him to earn his dinner with the sweat of his brow; and while I was in torment in a stately apartment, and restless on a bed of down, how joyfully would I have exchanged conditions with the Hind, who in an humble cottage was sleeping on sheaves of straw! How readily would I have parted with all the vanity of airy titles, all the advantages of riches and grandeur, to purchase health! Health, which gives relish to every enjoyment, and, like the rays of light, diffuses beauty upon every object. When I was ill, the beauty of the creation was effaced to me; I found no longer harmony in the sounds of music, nor joy while the sun poured his meridian glory; but turned my eyes from the intolerable lustre, and wished for the shades of night to veil his radiance. I had no pleasure in seeing every thing round me flourish, while I withered and decayed: The birds that warbled near my window, seemed to sing my funeral dirge; and every fly that buzzed in my chamber,

chamber, sounded like an alarm to judgment. When night came, I consider'd that probably I might never see day-light again till the morning of the resurrection dawned upon the earth: And when I was drowzy, and inclining to sleep, I imagined that I should perhaps never wake, till I heard the voice of the arch-angel, and the sound of the last trumpet, nor lift up my head, till I saw the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. This near prospect of death and judgment has put the world, and all its gaudy vanities into a just light, and has convinced me of the falsity of human comforts: And I have reason to bless God, who has given me such an opportunity of seeing things as they really are; and by making me sensible of the small consolation that all the earth can afford in the time of illness, and at the hour of death, has directed my eyes and hopes to Heaven, and made me know the value of those hours which were too often wasted in guilt or folly: And, believe me, *Leonora*, you will some time or other be sensible of this important truth. You are not more secure of years to come, than I appeared to be before this

2

illness;

illness; and will find the splendour of a court, and all the flatteries of life, miserable comforters upon a sick bed: The pleasures of this world will withdraw, and nothing remain with you but a sense of your past conduct; and when you find yourself ready to quit the stage, you will have no concern about any thing but how you have acted your part.

I am still very weak, tho' perfectly at ease; and I could be satisfied to remain so always, rather than hazard being again a slave to my passions and pleasures. I am, with all imaginable sincerity,

Your most faithful,

DIANA.





LETTER X.

To LYSANDER.

I Told you, some time since, that my affairs would oblige me to pass this summer at my estate in the West; I have been at it these six weeks : I brought no company hither but *Cleomedon*, who is so fond of his studies, that I seldom see him, unless it be at meals, but then he is always sprightly and chearful : And at other times I entertain myself either in the park or gardens, which afford me so much amusement, that I never find the day too long.

I cannot forbear repeating to you an adventure which I met with a few days ago.—
As I was riding over some of my farms, I came to the brow of an extreme high hill, from whence I had the prospect of the most beautiful valley imaginable; it was full of
woods,

woods, and watered with a large river; in some places it run very broad and strait, in others it was more contracted, and flowed in a thousand windings; sometimes it was lost among the woods, and rose again with fresh beauty, as it run thro' the flowery lawns. I was so charm'd with the sight of this sylvan scene, that I long'd to be in it: but the difficulty was how to get down the hill; for that side next the valley was almost perpendicular, and so rocky and cover'd with wood, that it seem'd unpassable. However, I dismounted, and leading my horse, found a narrow winding, by which I made a shift to get to the bottom of the hill; at the foot of which was a delightful plain, here and there interspersed with spreading oaks, beech, and sycamore trees. Here I had the pleasure to observe the spring of the river that watered that beautiful valley; it gushes out of the side of the rock, and, after falling from one clift to another, a great height, runs even with the grass through the plains and woods. I now got on horse-back again, and following the course of the river about three or four furlongs, I came to a low house, behind which there was a plat of trees, and before a little court, which had no

other fence than a laurel hedge breast-high. There was a little wicket which stood open, and the neatness of the place tempted me to go in ; which I did with the better assurance, because I imagined, by the appearance and size of the house, that it was not inhabited by any persons of distinction. I crossed the court without seeing any body, and came into a hall, the neatness of which is not to be described. But I own I was surprized to see a harpsichord, upon which lay some music-books ; I had the curiosity to look into them, and found some of them were Opera airs, but the greater part Hymns and Anthems : There lay on the table two large folios of maps, and upon the ground I observed a pair of very fine globes. A furniture so different from what I expected, made me uncertain whether I should follow my curiosity, which led me to go up a stair-case that was at one end of the hall, or go back without disturbing the owners of the house, who I now began to believe were of a different rank from what I at first imagined ; and yet it was inconceivable to me how any persons of distinction should be in such a house. My curiosity prevailed, and I went up : but when I came near the top
of

of the stairs, I heard a person reading with great justness, in a clear voice, which seem'd to be a woman's. I stopped a little to listen to her, and at last turning on my right-hand, I observed a door which stood half open, from whence I imagined the voice came : I drew near it without any noise, and could see a grave well-looking woman of about fifty, who was reading aloud to two very beautiful young ones, who were at work, embroidering flowers on white silk : They were dressed alike in white fatten waistcoats, and brown lutestring petticoats, and upon their heads fine laced caps, made like those of the common peasants : They had an air of innocence and modesty greater than I ever saw : She who appeared the elder of the two had dark hair, and the most blooming complexion imaginable ; she was tall, and finely shaped, and might have pass'd for an inimitable beauty, had not the young creature who sat by her shewed that it was possible even to surpass her : Her hair was almost flaxen, and her skin could scarce be equalled by any poetical simile ; she had large blue eyes, and her eye-brows and eye-lashes were a dark brown ; she had a sweetness in her countenance which would have dis-

armed a tyger of its rage. I had considered them but a few moments, when she who seemed the elder of the young women looked up, and seemed surprized at the sight of a stranger; however, she rose with great civility, and said, *Madam, here is a gentleman, who, I believe, would speak with you.* I then was so confounded, that I neither knew how to retire, or make an excuse for so unaccountable a visit: But the eldest of the ladies asked me to come in, with so benign and chearful an aspect, that it gave me courage to own the occasion of my intrusion, and ask a thousand pardons for it. To which she answered, *That my curiosity was its own punishment, since it had made me take so much pains, to see what was so little worth it, as her retirement.* I had now time to view the room they were in; it was hung to the top of the chairs with fine *Indian* matting, above which all round the room were shelves filled with books; and upon looking into them, I found them to be an admirable collection of history, divinity, and travels: There were a few books of the best philosophy, and some plays. There were upon stands several basons of flowers; and, in short, every thing was so elegant and charming,

charming, that I began to fancy myself in an enchanted habitation, and could not forbear expressing my desire to know how people of so extraordinary a genius came to live in so very retired a manner: Which the elderly lady perceiving, told me, that if I had patience, she would give me a faithful account of it. She said her husband was the heir of a noble family; that his name was *Theanor*, by whom she had two daughters, which were the young women I saw; that her husband died when the eldest was betwixt eight and nine years old, and left great debts: In vain did she apply to his rich relations, they would not assist her; so that she found herself either obliged to alter her way of living, or leave his debts unpaid; which, tho' the laws did not force her to satisfy, she thought herself bound to do, by all the rules of justice and honour. She therefore discharged all her servants, except two maids, and an ancient clergyman, whom she kept to instruct her daughters. With this small family she retired to this house, where she said she had lived upwards of fifteen years. She paid her husband's debts in the first seven; but had found so much peace in that solitude, that she was loth to quit it, and had the

pleasure to find both her daughters in the same mind. I could not forbear asking how they amused themselves in so absolute a retreat, and in what manner they divided the day. In answer to which, she told me, that indeed they seldom went abroad; and that when she had given me an account of one day, she told me their whole course of life for the last fifteen years:

As soon as we rise, said she, we meet in a little chapel below stairs, where the clergyman I mentioned to you reads prayers to us, and we sing a Psalm. After this, we have our breakfast, and my daughters amuse themselves with their music or painting, as they like best, while I am busied with the affairs of my family. About eleven o'clock we go into a room, where we prepare medicines for the poor, who cannot afford better help, and there have a press filled with cloaths for them of all sorts; and in the drawers under, are Bibles and other books of devotion, that while we take care of their bodies, their souls may not be entirely neglected. Here we spend our time till we are ready to dress for dinner: After dinner, my daughters play on the harpsichord, and sing, or sometimes we only converse till we have a mind to come up hither, where
one

one of us constantly reads while the others work. In the evening we walk till supper; after which, we call our little family, and end the day as we begun it, in praising God, and imploring his protection.

I told her, I was no longer surprised that they liked their way of living, since it appeared to me to be such, as must entirely secure them from all kinds of discontent.

They none of them answered to this, and upon looking up, I saw the face of the eldest daughter covered with tears. I expressed my concern at this sudden alteration, and begged to know the occasion of it. *Alas!* said her mother, *this unhappy girl is more to be pitied than you imagine; and it is only on her account that I feel sorrow. About five years ago she fell desperately in love with a young man, who was equally so with her: But the misfortune was, that he was not only much below her in his fortune, but of a family which are notorious for their wickedness, though he is not so himself; for his mother, who was perfectly virtuous, had instilled into him all the principles of piety and morality. They had long had a mutual tenderness before I perceived it; but when I did, and found how much Rosella's heart was fixed, it*
2 *afflicted*

afflicted me so that I fell into a deep melancholy, which ended in a dangerous sickness, and I was given over by my physicians. I then told Rosella the cause of my illness, and advised her against a marriage, the apprehensions of which had, in all probability, cost me my life. She fell on her knees by my bed-side, and bathing my hands with her tears, begged I would endeavour to recover; for if somebody was to be the victim of her unhappy passion, she was resolved it should be herself, since death would be less terrible to her than offending me. I rejoiced, and was surprized at her compliance, and hoped her affections had not been so firmly rooted as I since found. When I began to recover, she begged leave to write to Alphonso, (for that was the name of her lover) and give him an account of the promise she had made, and the reasons which forced her to it. He received the news with inexpressible grief, and the next day left his father's house; to which he has never yet returned, nor has any body heard of him. I have been so much touched with my daughter's sufferings, and the patience with which she endured them, without ever upbraiding me as the cause of them, that I now wish as ardently as she does, to see him return; that I may have the pleasure of rewarding her filial piety, by giving her hand
where

where she long ago placed her heart. She could not end this relation without tears, in which her daughters accompanied her.

I own I was moved with compassion at the story of *Rosella*, and cannot take my thoughts from that charming retirement, or forget the beauty of *Melissa*, which was the name of the younger daughter.

I staid till it was dark, and then took my leave, extremely delighted with so uncommon an adventure. Adieu.

BELLAMOUR.

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